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ABSTRACT

The papers in this collection provide a brief state-of-the-art statement on the role of non-standard dialects of English in education and on some implications of the Ann Arbor decision. The following papers are included: (1) "Vernacular Black English: Setting the Issues in Time," by Roger W. Shuy; (2) "Beyond Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for Other Non-Mainstream Varieties," by Walt Wolfram; (3) "Evaluating the Language of Black English Speakers: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision," by Fay Boyd Vaughn-Cooke; (4) "Lawyers, Linguists, and Language Arts: From the School Administrator's Viewpoint," by Thomas P. Pietras; (5) "Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for the Classroom," by Elizabeth M. Whatley; (6) "Knowledge into Practice: Delivering Research to Teachers," by Robert Berdan; (7) "Teacher Attitude Change: Does Informing Make a Difference?" by Shirley Lewis; and (8) "Projecting the Issue into Time: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go from Here?" by William S. Hall. (AMH)

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Reactions to Ann Arbor: Vernacular Black English and Education

edited by Marcia Farr Whiteman

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3

Contents

Introduction v

Vernacular Black English: Setting the Issues in Time . . 1
Roger W. Shuy
Georgetown University & Center for Applied Linguistics

Beyond Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for Other Non-Mainstream Varieties 10
Walt Wolfram
University of the District of Columbia & Center for Applied Linguistics

Evaluating the Language of Black English Speakers: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision 24
Fay Boyd Vaughn-Cooke
University of the District of Columbia

Lawyers, Linguists, and Language Arts: From the School Administrator's Viewpoint 55
Thomas P. Pietras
Ann Arbor Public Schools

Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for the Classroom 61
Elizabeth M. Whatley
Cheyney State College

Knowledge into Practice: Delivering Research to Teachers 77
Robert Berdan
SWRL Research and Development Laboratory

Teacher Attitude Change: Does Informing Make a Difference? 85
Shirley A. R. Lewis
George Peabody College for Teachers

Projecting the Issue into Time: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go from Here? 93
William S. Hall
Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois

References 99

Introduction

The Ann Arbor court case has again revived interest in an area that has in some ways lain dormant for 10-15 years. As Shuy points out in the first paper in this volume, there was much interest in the role of nonstandard dialects in education during the 60s, but for a number of reasons activity seemed to taper off during the 70s. It is significant, however, that this court case could not have occurred without the research base that exists on Vernacular Black English (VBE). Without the knowledge created during the 60s and early 70s about VBE as a language system, the argument could not be made that VBE is a legitimate, rule-governed language system which is different from, but not deficient in respect to, standard English. With the evidence in this body of knowledge, parents can ask, and now have asked, that their children's language be taken into account in the education process. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect other cases to follow: the "Larry P." case* in California appears to be the first.

This is clearly a precedent-setting case. Many schools may want now to adapt to the spirit of Judge Joiner's decision (in a sense, to come into compliance before litigation). To help these schools, we have gathered the papers in this book to provide a brief state-of-the-art statement on the role of nonstandard dialects in education and on some implications of the Ann Arbor decision. These eight papers were originally presented at a one-day Seminar on Black English held at NIE in September 1979. The papers discuss the history of work in the area; nonstandard dialects other than VBE; and problems of assessment, of classroom reading instruction, and of getting crucial information to teachers. Also provided here are discussions of the school administrator's perspective and of needed further research.

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*_Larry P._ v. _State of California_, C-71-2270 R.F.P. (N.D. Calif. 1979).

One of the most misinterpreted facts in this case is the desire of these parents for their children to learn standard English. They have argued that, while they want the language of their children recognized as legitimate and fully systematic, they want above all for their children to learn to read. While this case is explicit about teaching reading, it is not explicit about teaching oral standard English or teaching writing in standard English; however, cases with these intents may follow.

Many mass media articles express the fear that if we "legitimize" vernacular dialects, students will not be motivated to learn standard English. Then, with the negative attitudes of our society toward vernacular dialects, these students will be "kept down" in the system, losing opportunities for good jobs and advanced education. This fear is understandable, but perhaps not a realistic assessment of student attitudes. As Lewis points out in her paper here, her work shows that students clearly realize the importance of learning standard English and have a strong desire to do so.

The authors of these papers would agree that we owe children respect for what they have learned up to the point at which we begin teaching them. In fact, unless we know what they have learned up to that point, we are not able to teach them most effectively. One thing children beginning school have learned is how to talk, and this requires knowledge of complex phonological, grammatical, and lexico-semantic systems. They have also begun to learn a complex set of socially-determined rules guiding the use of their language system. Gaining full sociolinguistic competence in a language is apparently part of a life-long process, especially if learning to use the written mode of a language is included. However, it is important for us to realize how much children know, not just how much they have yet to learn.

With the exception of a very small percentage of children with actual language disorders (see Vaughn-Cooke's paper for a fuller discussion of this), every child has achieved much along the pathway toward full sociolinguistic competence. What each child has learned before coming to school, however, is appropriate to the home and community contexts in which the learning took place. Consequently, many researchers and educators speak of a "mismatch" among the many contexts from home and community to school. Clearly, children need to learn how to use their expanding linguistic repertoires appropriately in various contexts. And it is reasonable to assume that the school is the appropriate place for such learning to take place.

But do we know enough to facilitate this learning? While our research base on the structure of VBE is adequate to sustain a court case such as this one, we still know relatively little about rules for VBE use (pragmatics). As Hall points out in

his paper here, we also know little about VBE semantic structures. In addition, we know little about either the structural or functional aspects of other vernaculars of English (see Wolfram's paper here for a fuller discussion of this).

Finally, we need to continue experimenting with methods for getting available knowledge to teachers in ways that will help them do what they are trying to do, that is, effectively teach children who speak a vernacular variety of English. Three papers in this volume (those of Berdan, Lewis, and Pietras) address the problems inherent in putting research into practice, and suggest some solutions to these problems. In addition, Whatley's paper provides an account of how teachers need to combine knowledge of their children's language (both structural and functional aspects) with knowledge of instructional approaches to the teaching of reading.

Marcia Farr Whiteman
Team Leader for Research on Writing
National Institute of Education

Vernacular Black English: Setting the Issues In Time

Roger W. Shuy

The study of language variation suffers a very peculiar fate. Almost everyone has a deep interest in the differences in words, pronunciations, grammar, and style which set us off from each other in our communication but, at the same time, we have an inordinate ability to suspend our belief that such differences exist. This appears to be the same principle which is at work in the tasks of both reading and listening: we edit out the less significant aspects of the communication or simply relegate them to the realm of connotation. Yet we are nonetheless vaguely aware of these differences, if not as language per se, then at least as some sort of effect. Throughout written history we have records of such variation, from the pronunciation of *shibboleth* in the Old Testament to the semiphonetic transcription of speech in novels, biographies, and stories. Most people have no metalanguage for variation, whether it is based on geographic, stylistic, social, occupational, racial, sex, or age differences. We tend to call it all by a very few, very vague and general terms--*twang, jargon, guttural, brogue, nasal,* etc.

The study of *regional* variation in speech has the oldest tradition in this country. Linguists and philologists have also been interested in language change over time, but primarily over long periods of time, and not, for example, change which occurs between living generations.

There were many things wrong with the study of English language variation in this country two decades ago when a new interest in Black English emerged. There were many things we had to learn just to *study* Black English, much less to analyze, explain, or devise pedagogical strategies related to it.

It is easy to forget exactly how things were at an earlier stage of our development. To go back and reexamine these stages is always a humbling experience for it reveals portions of our incomplete understandings, our developing ideas, and our biases that we, in later years, would prefer to forget.

It is easy to forget that the early forays into Black English study were not motivated by high-powered linguistic objectivity or science but rather by problems arising in the classroom. As is so often the case, the problem born in the classroom took several years to find nourishment from the disciplines which would help feed it (psychology, anthropology, linguistics, sociology). And, until proper attention could be given to it, it developed several dangerous symptoms caused by an improper diet of home-made nourishment. Rumors developed that children were non-verbal; that they had no communicative exchanges with their parents; that they had a miniscule vocabulary; and that they were crushed by noise in the home, a multitude of siblings, and some sort of inordinate squalor. Their language was considered unsystematic and haphazard, and they were thought to reflect cognitive deficits in the failure of their oral language to match that of their middle class teachers. If ever there was a field in need of research, it was this one.

It is easy to forget that the research that *was* attempted was met with criticism on almost every side. Educators got to the problem first, offering suggestions for altering the speech of Black children to match classroom expectations (Golden, 1963). Later this was to be attacked from the standpoint that it wiped out the child's culture. Equally serious was the attack by linguists that the teachers had not analyzed the language accurately (or at all) and had stressed the teaching of insignificant features rather than crucial ones. It took several years, but an analysis of Vernacular Black English (VBE) was gradually carried out, usually by Whites alone, but making use of Black scholars whenever possible. Seminal studies were done in New York (Labov et al.,1968), in Detroit (Shuy et al., 1968), in Washington (Fasold, 1972), and in Los Angeles (Legum et al., 1971). Generalizations about the findings of these studies have been made by Fasold and Wolfram (1970) in relatively non-technical language. The studies have also been subjected to attack, frequently by Black scholars who can see error in the analysis or who object to the fact that they were done, in the main, by Whites. Their attack frequently asserts that Whites can never know how Black English really works, that this is just another case of Whites trying to belittle or hold back Blacks by calling attention to weakness rather than strength, that not all Blacks talk that way, or that the White analysts have improper or self-serving motives for studying (exploiting) Blacks. Conservatives have attacked such studies as well, considering them permissive and generally contributing to the "anything goes" philosophy which presumably characterizes linguists anyway. Lastly, linguists have attacked each other's analyses for various reasons (something which is quite predictable in a field which fosters such behavior).

It is easy to forget that language pedagogy had relatively little to offer that was directly related to the systematic

differences among Black speakers. Learning by pattern drill was prominent in foreign language pedagogy in the 60s. The contrastive approach to learning was commonly accepted in learning a second language. But learning a second dialect, it soon became clear, was not the same thing as learning a second language. For one thing, there was little or no confusion in comprehension from a standard to a vernacular version of the same language. The concept of interference, then, had to be redefined in a cross-dialectal setting. (Today, Wolfram and Christian (1979) suggest the term *influence* to apply to cross-dialect difference rather than *interference*, which is preserved, then, in its original sense.) The result of early efforts to produce materials to teach standard English to vernacular Black English speakers was largely compendiums of rather dull and useless drills which were based either on the assumption that foreign language pedagogy was directly applicable to VBE or on the more traditional assumption of English and language arts instruction that bad speech should simply be eradicated.

It is also easy to forget that one reason why we have so few, if any, sound teaching materials related to VBE is that commercial publishers simply could not afford to gamble that their products were scientifically accurate, politically expedient, or economically feasible. Efforts at being "relevant," a catchword in the 60s, were heavily motivated by the potential for profit. This criticism becomes less severe when we stop and realize that these publishers were, indeed, commercial. Their business was to make a profit, and if the potential product would not sell or if it would probably bring charges of racism down on the producer, such publishers would have good cause for worry. And worry they did. Very few commercial products ever reached the public, and those that did were of uneven quality at best. One notable set of junior high oral language materials, *English Now*,[1] which grew out of the research of the Urban Language Study at the Center for Applied Linguistics, was withdrawn from the market by the publisher once criticisms, just or unjust, were made.

Many other sets of materials were developed by school systems, usually by a teacher team operating during summer vacation. In 1970 the U.S. Office of Education provided funding to the Center for Applied Linguistics for the collection, analysis, and evaluation of materials in existence at that time. A careful search of fugitive and public materials revealed a total of 14 sets of primary (K-6) materials dealing with VBE, nine sets of secondary materials (7-12), and six sets of adult materials.[2] Most packages had a teacher's manual. (Actually, about half of them consisted *only* of a teacher's manual.) Only six had tapes. None of the materials is in use today. Indeed, if one were to try to locate them, one would encounter great difficulty in determining how to do so.

It is easy to forget that relatively little new research has been

carried out since 1970 and that few new programs have been developed since that time. To be sure, some research has come forth, but, by comparison to the golden years of the 60s, the outgrowth has been meagre. It is not as easy to forget why such a turnabout took place. Most of the early work, as noted before, was done by White researchers. Blacks became naturally suspicious of this situation and began to demand representation on and, eventually, control of research which involved their race. Some White researchers agreed with this and shifted their own research interests to other matters or to training Black scholars to do this type of work. For a combination of reasons, however, the quantity of research in VBE decreased considerably in the 70s, partly because of a general feeling of discouragement about the possibility that such research could bring about significant change in the schools.

The major thrust of the work of linguists who pursued the question of the mismatch of spoken language and beginning reading was to focus on grammatical, not phonological, interference. Melmed's (1971) research, as well as that of Rystrom (1970), Rentel and Kennedy (1972), and Osterberg (1961), tend to be elaborate rejections of positions never held, at least not by linguists.

That some of the research on dialect interference in reading is flawed has been pointed out by both Simons (n.d.) and Venezky (1970). The usual educational research flaws of sample size and comparability are shared by the studies of Schaaf (1971) and Sims (1972), neither of whom had an adequate number of subjects nor comparable reading materials across dialects. Both studies focused on grammatical rather than phonological interference, but problems arose when decisions had to be made regarding the adequacy of the language representation in the text. Sociolinguists have been careful to point out that dialect variation is more a continuum than a polarity and that speakers of one dialect may differ from those of another dialect in such minute matters as the *frequency of occurrence* of a particular feature more than in its categorical presence or absence. The dialect reader projects in the early 70s proved little or nothing largely because they focused only on the *forms* of language, not on the *functions*.

It appears that language functions, unlike phonology and grammar, are developmental almost throughout one's life. Few adults, for example, ever become proficient at the language function of condoling. For the sake of survival, children learn how to interrupt appropriately rather early. They learn that interruption is complex and often asymmetrical. (Teachers can interrupt children rather blatantly, but children must develop sophisticated strategies for interrupting teachers.) One also learns how to avoid being interrupted, how to get or avoid a turn in talking, how to refuse, how to clarify, even how to obfuscate with dignity. What may be considered rudeness may

be only an imperfectly developed sense of interruption skills, and it is critical for teachers to be able to distinguish between the two. Dialect influence from functional language remains to be seriously explored but offers exciting possibilities in the future.

It is also easy to forget that the great controversey surrounding the potential effect of VBE on the acquisition of reading skills was never clearly resolved. For a brief while it was assumed that the generally accepted position of reading specialists that phonology plays a central role in early decoding provided a clue to the potential interference of VBE on early reading.

Melmed (1971) concluded that while the Black readers contrasted to the Whites in auditory discrimination and production of these diagnostic pronunciations, they comprehended them equally well in both oral and silent reading. This research, then, rejects the hypothesis that phonological interference affects learning to read. As Simons points out, Melmed's study is flawed in several ways.[3] Particularly interesting to the linguist, however, is the fact that phonological interference was even suggested, since in his view the English spelling system is complicated but highly regular.

It is easy to forget that many of the assumptions which undergird the research and development in VBE are somewhat foreign to the schools. For one thing, English education has been built on the notion that there is a marked polarity between good English and bad English. Even though almost two decades have passed since Martin Joos' *The Five Clocks* was published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), most teachers do not understand the concepts of variability, the continuum, and context. Most tend to believe that standard English is invariant, context free, and a polarity. They do not understand that all language varies, including standard language, that the acquisition of standardness involves passing through stages (though Labov explained this principle in an NCTE publication in 1964), and that there are many life contexts which call for the appropriate use of various forms of English, not just the standard form.

Another assumption undergirding research and development in VBE is that it is useful to know, descriptively, the language of the learners in some detail at the beginning of their educational programs. This involves studying their speech, regardless of its correctness, as a means of starting with them where they are. Since the schools abhor incorrectness of any kind, it is difficult for them to tolerate such incorrectness as part of the learning process. Thus, the contrastive approach to learning a second dialect, involving as it did the use of *both* vernacular and standard in the classroom, was frowned upon by parents and educators alike. And when it was suggested that the principle of beginning with children where they are might also

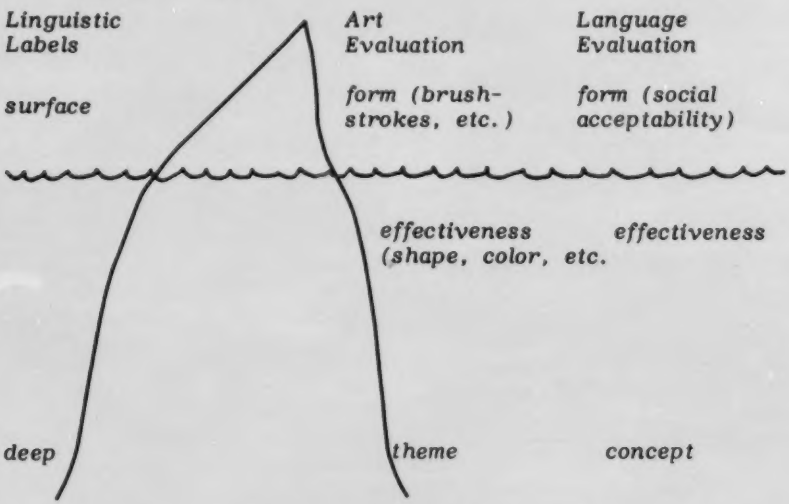
be applicable to the teaching of reading, the public got up in arms very quickly. "The very idea," they cried, "of teaching children to speak VBE in order to read it." It mattered little that nobody had ever suggested such a program. The public believed what it wanted to believe, and the research was stifled in its beginning.

It is easy to forget that research and development in VBE is not easy for the public to understand. Linguists have known for years what it is like to deal with a subject--language--which is so invisible to the general public that it cannot be seen or understood. When I was awarded a contract by USOE to study Detroit speech in 1966, I was read into the *Congressional Record* as a person who was wasting $120,000 of the taxpayers' money to study ain't. Senator Proxmire, of course, has enjoyed this game of preying on scholarly activity, misrepresenting it to make it appear ludicrous and then capitalizing on the basic misconceptions of his constituents to get stronger voter support. Some members of the public have different motivations. When the third edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* was published, many were the self-proclaimed experts in lexicography who purported to know more than the learned staff of that enterprise. More recently we have become infested with the likes of Edwin Newman, the newscaster, who proclaims Truth about language without benefit of professional training in that subject. In short, everyone is an expert in linguistics. Linguists have become accustomed to this plight; now education appears to be facing the same fate. The general public also expresses its expertise willingly and easily about curriculum, materials, teaching, administration, and other matters without, of course, the benefit of any professional training.

It is easy to forget that much of the progress in the development of basic and applied research in VBE in the past two decades was achieved at some personal cost. Perhaps because the language and pedagogy issue grow out of a social concern which was born of considerable guilt, the moral issues involved were often imprecise. Some of the early urban research, for example, saw fit to surreptitiously taperecord Black children. As a field procedure, this issue was subject to considerable discussion. On many occasions it appeared that there was no willingness at all to accept even the potential sincerity of the motives of the researcher or group whose position was attacked. The issue has made enemies irrationally, probably because of the heavily charged emotions involved. It did not seem reasonable to those who advocated bidialectalism, for example, that advocates of the eradication position might be acting sincerely toward the solution of a problem. Nor did it occur to eradicationists that bidialectalists were as honestly motivated as they were. Eventually a third position, one which defied a neat label but could have been symbolized as the "teach Whites to improve their attitude" camp, pictured bidialectalists as racist

opportunists whose actions were motivated by willful ignorance and crass personal gain (Sledd, 1969). Otherwise respectable scholars resorted to tactics of name-calling, innuendo, wrenching from context, doctored quotations, and selective reading in the attacks on presumably opposing positions (Sledd, 1972). As a result of this animosity, which was not just between Blacks and Whites, a number of researchers decided to do other things, and many of the research issues remained unresolved. This "holier-than-thou" period had its effect on work done in the early and mid 70s and left a vacuum at the very time when acceleration might have been expected.

It is easy to forget that all of the work done on VBE in the past two decades was carried out in the context of a surface level evaluation system. It is odd that a sociolinguist would have to point out that the variability in VBE does not operate at the concept level or even at the effectiveness level. Borrowing the metaphor of deep and surface structure from linguistics, we can view VBE variability at the level of surface social acceptability. This does not make it unimportant, but it does set this variability in a realistic framework. The familiar iceberg may well serve to illustrate:



Just as one would not evaluate a work of art strictly from its surface forms, so one should not evaluate VBE speaking or writing solely from its surface social acceptability. However obvious this principle may be, it is not frequently practiced in our school evaluation systems. We tend to assess that which we can see and count--surface forms. In writing this means punctuation, mechanics, and spelling. In speech, it means

noun-verb agreement and past tense marker accuracy. Neither of these strategies deals with the conceptual or effectiveness levels of evaluation, but rather only with surface social acceptability. This is not to say that such acceptability is trivial (this is why the warning seems ironic from the mouth of a sociolinguist), but simply that such evaluation is only one of three types of evaluation, the other two of which are actually more central to the function of the communication. Since VBE features are at the *form*, or surface, level of language, they are frequently given undue significance in the evaluation system. That is, to many it may seem far better to have a bad concept and good form than to have a good concept with bad form. This principle plagues all of educational evaluation, and it is unfortunate that VBE forms are so exaggerated by it.

In summary, the false assumptions about VBE held by the public over the years include the following:

(1) That VBE is bad English and that it is absurd to think one needs to study it or to do anything besides wipe it out.
(2) That no special expertise or attitudes are necessary to teach children who speak VBE.
(3) That classrooms consist of homogeneous populations in which the known research information applies equally across the board.
(4) That the training in teaching and education acquired by teachers and administrators is inferior to the training in linguistics, psychology, or anthropology acquired by researchers.
(5) That anyone can teach but that only the particularly intelligent and talented can research.
(6) That knowledge of the facts of language will, by themselves, suffice to bring about changes in classroom practice.

Now some 20 years after the first glimmer of interest in VBE, we find outselves just about where we were when study on it began. We have done considerable research on the phonological, lexical, and grammatical forms of VBE but little or no research on systematic functional differences. We have done a rather poor job of developing teaching materials, curricula, and teacher education programs (else there would have been no need for the Ann Arbor decision). We have tried, for a while, to ignore the issue and hope that it would go away but now, with the Ann Arbor case, we are brought back to a stark reality once again, and the words of T. S. Eliot seem especially appropriate here:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.[4]

Those of us who have worked in this vineyard in the past two decades have been waiting a long time for the grapes to

ripen. We feel a distinct sense of *déjà vu* as the new generation is educated into the issues we grappled with so fervently in the 60s. In truth, many of us thought the pedagogical issue of VBE was all but dead, buried by the conservatism of the 70s. But here it is, back again, bigger than life. This time I hope we do better by it.

NOTES

[1]Irwin Feigenbaum, *English Now* (New York, New Century, 1969).

[2]R. W. Shuy, I. Feigenbaum, and A. Grognet, *Sociolinguistic Theory, Materials and Training Programs* (Washington, D.C., Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970).

[3]Herbert D. Simons, "Black Dialect and Reading Interference: A Review and Analysis of the Research Evidence," mimeographed (Berkeley, University of California, n.d.).

[4]T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets:* Little Gidding V:26-29.

Beyond Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for Other Non-Mainstream Varieties

Walt Wolfram

INTRODUCTION

It is appropriate that "Black English" was the language variety in focus in the landmark judicial decision involving educational equity and dialect diversity. As the non-mainstream variety used by a substantial proportion of the largest minority population in the U.S., it deserves to be the dialect at issue in a landmark legal decision. Despite laws which guarantee Blacks accessibility to the same schools as their White counterparts, it is apparent that Blacks are not participating in the educational process in an equitable way. There are no doubt many dimensions to this educational inequity, as Judge Joiner pointed out in his opinion and order, and there is no simple solution. Nonetheless, language differences deserve to be considered as a possible barrier to educational equity.

The role of linguistic and sociolinguistic testimony in guiding Judge Joiner's decision (Civil Action No. 7-71861, U.S. District Court, East District, Detroit, Michigan) seems to be fairly obvious. The wealth of descriptive data brought to bear by expert linguistic testimony obviously influenced the following conclusion by the judge.

> The language of "black English" has been shown to be a distinct, definable version of English, different from standard English of the school and the general world of communications. It has definite language patterns, syntax, grammar,and history. (p. 23)

The systematic nature of the language patterns of Black English seem obvious to a linguist, but such a conclusion must be seen against a background of popular mythology which has considered this variety to be nothing more than an unworthy and haphazard distortion of the "standard" variety of English. Negative

attitudes and unjustified stereotypes about Black English have persisted in the face of sociolinguistic knowledge concerning it, with all the implications that this negativism can mean for the educational process (Shuy and Fasold, 1973; Pietras, 1977). The discrepancy between the sociolinguistic facts about Black English and much of the popular opinion governing the education of Black English-speaking children thus led Judge Joiner to the following determination.

> The court cannot find that the defendant School Board has taken steps (1) to help teachers understand the problem; (2) to help provide them with knowledge about the children's use of a "black English" language system; and (3) to suggest ways and means of using that knowledge in teaching the students to read. (p. 32)

Thus, the precedent has been set, and a plan to address these concerns has been implemented by the Ann Arbor School Board. The implications of the decision, however, do not stop with Ann Arbor. The landmark decision would certainly seem to have applicability to other areas (and there are many of them) where similar circumstances exist. The lack of adequate progress in language-related tasks, particularly reading, is certainly evident in many areas of the U.S. where Black English speakers reside. The potential for application beyond Ann Arbor is, of course, part of the significance of the case.

While descriptive studies of Black English have certainly been prominent in sociolinguistics over the past two decades, we must be careful to point out that Black English is not the only non-mainstream variety of English. Current descriptions of dialects in the U.S. include a range of varieties which must be considered outside of standard English, some of which are ethnically correlated, but some of which are simply class or even regional varieties. What is the significance of this judicial decision for these varieties? Does it have a bearing on children who speak other non-mainstream varieties and do not appear to participate in the educational process in an equitable way?

The statute under which the action was pressed is as follows:

> No State shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin, by--
> ***
> (f) the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs. 20 U.S.C. 1073(f).

In the following sections, we shall examine the possible applicability of the Ann Arbor decision by setting forth parallel

characteristics for other non-mainstream-speaking populations. Since is not our intention to suggest a legal interpretation of the statute cited above, our argument does not revolve around the issue of which groups might qualify on the basis of "race, color, sex, or national origin." Our goal is simply to investigate some of the possible linguistic, sociolinguistic, and educational parallels for other groups of non-mainstream speakers. From this perspective, we can stay within the limits of our own expertise, and allow the judicial system to interpret the legal statute as it may or may not pertain to other groups.

THE LINGUISTIC PARALLEL

As a preliminary to establishing a particular dialect as a potential barrier to educational equity, it seems necessary to establish the variety as a distinct linguistic system. Thus, Black English is characterized in the decision as follows:

> . . . a language system, which is a part of the English language but different in significant respects from the standard English used in the school setting, the commercial world, the world of the arts and science, among the professions, and in government. . . . It [Black English] contains aspects of Southern dialect and is used largely by black people in their casual conversation and informal talk. (p. 14)

As evidence for the distinctness of Black English, a list of characteristic features is cited, including many of the structures found in summaries of this variety (e.g. Fasold and Wolfram, 1970; Burling, 1973). Certainly, other varieties of English must be admitted as distinct non-mainstream varieties along with Black English. Thus, studies of the rural working-class population in the Appalachian region lead to a similar conclusion about this, a variety conveniently labeled "Appalachian English."* Our own study has led to the following conclusion about this variety.

> . . . we use the term AE [Appalachian English] to refer to the variety of English most typically associated with the working class rural population found in one particular region of the Appalachian range. . . . there is evidence, both from our own informal comparisons of working class

*For the sake of continuity, we shall consistently use "Appalachian English" as our reference dialect throughout the remainder of the paper. Other dialects certainly might have been used as a case in point.

> speakers from other rural areas and available descriptions of other sections of Appalachia, that many of the features we describe have relatively wide distribution within the central Appalachian range.
>
> . . . Quite obviously, there are many features we have described which are not peculiar to speakers within the Appalachian range. On the other hand, there also appear to be a small subset of features which may not be found in other areas. Even if this is not the case, we may justify our distinction of AE on the basis of the combination of features. (Wolfram and Christian, 1976:29)

As was done for Black English in the Ann Arbor case, a characteristic list might be set up for Appalachian English. Consider, for example, the following, abbreviated from a much more complete inventory of structures found in Wolfram and Christian (1976).

1. The use of a prefix a- on verb forms
   e.g. I knew he was a-tellin' the truth.
   He just kept a-beggin' and a-cryin'.

2. Subject-verb agreement patterns
   e.g. Some people makes them this way.
   You was quite busy.

3. Past tense irregular verbs
   e.g. He hearn something.
   He knowed he was right.

4. Completive done
   e.g. I done forgot.
   She's done sold it.

5. Intensifying adverbs
   e.g. It liketa scared you plumb to death.
   He stayed there a right smart little while.

6. Use of words with different meanings
   e.g. I got blessed out. ('scolded severely')
   I reckon to my age and the way I worked. ('acknowledge,' defer')

7. Absence of plural after noun of weights and measures
   e.g. I got two pound of hull beans.
   Twenty year ago things was different.

8. Use of object pronoun as "personal dative"
   e.g. Well, I take me a pick and shovel.

She wanted her some liver pudding.

9. The use of "double subjects"
   e.g. My mother, she went to the store.
   And then my brother, he was fixin' to shoot it.

10. Use of h on it and ain't
    e.g. Hain't a thing that'll hurt you.
    When the winter set in hit set in.

11. Use of "intrusive" t
    e.g. He done it oncet or twicet.
    I started acrosst and found it was a big clifft.

12. Use of they or it for there
    e.g. They was five of them in the coop.
    It was five of them in the coop.

As with the Black English listed in the Ann Arbor decision, this inventory is only intended to be illustrative. Furthermore, some of these features are shared with other varieties of English. In fact, a number of the items (e.g. "double subjects" and it for there) are shared with Black English. Though the historical tradition which has resulted in Appalachian English (the language of isolated rural mountainous enclaves of early English settlers) is quite different from that hypothesized for Black English (a pidgin language of the slaves which became a creole and was further refined by contact with standard English), both varieties have established and maintained a distinct dialect of English.

We do not claim that a variety such as Appalachian English as we have defined it here is as different from standard English as Black English. Determining the extent of difference from a standard variety can be a rather complicated issue, since it depends on the kind of measure used to determine language differences. Quite clearly, some structures of Appalachian English are closer to standard English than comparable structures in Black English. By the same token, however, there are differences between Appalachian English and standard English that are not found in a comparison of Black English and standard English.

An important difference in the relationship between standard English and the non-mainstream variety might be maintained if a difference in intelligibility were established for Black English and standard English. But this type of evidence is not established in the Ann Arbor case. As a matter of fact, the opposite conclusion is reached.

> The teachers in King School had no difficulty in understanding the students or their parents in the school setting and the children could understand the teachers

> and other children in that setting. In other words, so far as understanding is concerned in the school setting, although there was initially a type of language difference, there was no barrier to understanding caused by the language.
>
> There seems to be no problem existing in this case relating to communication between the children and their teachers or between the children and other children in the school. (pps. 25 and 26)

On the basis of such a conclusion, the more stringent characteristic of dialect unintelligibility is eliminated as a requisite for the existence of a "language barrier." This is not to say that differences in language do not lead to some particular differences in comprehension. There is, in fact, some basis for maintaining that particular differences in comprehension patterns might arise from dialect differences. Notwithstanding these particular differences, substantive problems in general intelligibility are not a necessary condition for the language barrier. It seems sufficient to establish the integrity of a dialect which differs substantially from the standard variety as the linguistic norm in this case. Accordingly, we might include a range of varieties which meet these conditions of linguistic difference. For example, Appalachian English, as we have defined it above, matches the characteristics summarized in the decision for Black English (pps. 23-24):

(1) It is "a distinct, definable version of English, different from the standard English of the school and general world of communications."
(2) "It has definite language patterns, syntax, grammar, and history."
(3) "In some communities and among some people in this country, it is the customary mode of oral, informal communication."
(4) A significant number of Appalachians use or have used some version of Appalachian English in oral communications, and "many of them incorporate one or more aspects . . . in their more formal talk."
(5) It "is not a language used by the mainstream of society--black or white," nor is it "an acceptable method of communication in the educational world. . . . It is largely a system that is used in casual and informal communication among the poor and lesser educated."

In terms of its linguistic structure and its distribution within the community, a variety such as Appalachian English is quite parallel to a variety such as Black English.

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC PARALLEL

Linguistic differences do not in themselves provide a basis for educational inequity. There exist many widely-recognized differences among the varieties of English which cause no apparent barrier to the educational process. For example, regional differences among mainstream, middle class groups seem to be readily tolerated. The middle class New Englander's absence of r in terms such as car (cah) or court (cou't), or the use of tonic to refer to an object labeled as soda or pop in other regions, is hardly considered a barrier to the educational process. In fact, various regional differences of this type are typically viewed with an attitude of bemused curiosity, even if they lead to initial confusion of a referent.

The sociolinguistic dimension of language differences in an educational setting arises when language differences are associated with socially "unacceptable groups." Ultimately, the value associated with a particular way of saying something is related to the social status of the people who are saying it that way. Thus, Black English is a stigmatized variety of English not because of its linguistic characteristics, but because it is predominantly used by working-class Blacks. Social and historical facts indicate that if the same variety were spoken by middle class White mainstream groups, it would be recognized as the standard variety.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is essential to observe (as stated previously) that Black English "is not a language used by the mainstream of society--black or white," and that it is "not an acceptable method of communication in the educational world, in the commercial community, in the community of the arts and science, or among professionals" (p. 23). It is socially stigmatized because it is most typically used "in many areas of the country where blacks predominate . . . particularly the poor and those with lesser education" (p. 17). The upshot, then, is that Black English is "commonly thought of as an inferior method of speech and those who use this system may be thought of as 'dumb' or 'inferior'" (p. 18). Conclusions about the low esteem in which Black English is held by the mainstream population are amply supported by research on language attitudes (cf. Williams, 1973; Shuy and Williams, 1973; Shuy et al., 1969). Ultimately, it is difficult to separate the issue of language esteem from underlying attitudes about race and status (e.g. Williams, 1973).

While we do not intend to diminish the significance of racism and classism, which have resulted in the stigmatization of Black English, we must admit that other groups and their concomitant language patterns have also become socially stigmatized. Consider, for example, what the distinguished English historian Arnold Toynbee concluded about the isolated rural communities of Southern Appalachia:

> The Appalachian has relapsed into illiteracy and into all the superstitions for which illiteracy opens the door. . . . The Appalachian mountain people are the American counterparts of the latter-day white barbarians of the Old World: . . . *ci-devant* heirs of the Western civilization who have relapsed into barbarism under the depressing effect of a challenge which has been inordinately severe . . . [Their] nearest social analogues are . . . certain "fossils" of extinct civilizations which have survived in fastness and have likewise relapsed into barbarism there. (Quoted in Mencken, 1962:116)

The noted literary authority on the English language, H. L. Mencken, was not as categorically condemning of Appalachian mountaineers and their dialect, but the low esteem of the people and the dialect still surfaces.

> It would be ridiculous to say that all the Appalachian mountaineers are on this low level, or to assume that their stock is wholly decayed. They produce, at somewhat longish intervals, individuals of marked ability--whether by chance adulteries or by some fortunate collocation and effervescence of Mendelian characters is not certain.[1] But such individuals usually escape from their native alps at the first chance, so that their genes do not improve the remaining population, which continues to go downhill, with excessive inbreeding to help it along. The speech of these poor folk, who have been called "our contemporary ancestors," is ignorant but very far from unpleasant, as I can testify who have heard it used to preach the Word in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. (Mencken, 1962:117)

Mencken's professed intrigue with the language of Appalachia, unfortunately, does not compensate for the underlying negative attributes also contained in the description. In essence, mountain people are described as genetically inferior, incestuous, and ignorant, with the rare successful individual somehow managing to escape the heritage of the mountain culture. The analogy between type of assessment and the stereotyped caricature of Blacks and their language should be obvious. It is no wonder, then, that Dial (1970) summarizes current opinion of Appalachian English in the following manner.

> The dialect spoken by Appalachian people has been given a variety of names, the majority of them somewhat less than complimentary. Educated people who look with disfavor on this particular form of speech are perfectly honest in their belief that something called the English Language, which they see as a completed work--unchanging and fixed

> for all time--has been taken and, through ignorance shamefully distorted by the mountain folk. (Dial, 1970: 16)

Instead of being viewed as a distinct language variety, with "definite language patterns, syntax, grammar, and history" (p. 23), Appalachian English is commonly dismissed as an unworthy, unsystematic, and illegitimate distortion of English. Like Black English, it is a stigmatized variety of English, with all the negative sociolinguistic attitudes about its speakers that this status entails.

THE EDUCATIONAL PARALLEL

While the establishment of linguistic and sociolinguistic parallels is an essential preliminary in examining the wider applicability of the Ann Arbor decision, the heart of the problem is ultimately an educational one. Judge Joiner stated this problem as follows:

> The problem in this case revolves around the ability of the school system . . . to teach the reading of standard English to children who, it is alleged, speak "black English" as a matter of course at home and in their home community. . . . (p. 3)

According to Joiner, "a major goal of a school system is to teach reading, writing, speaking, and understanding standard English" (p. 3) and "a child who does not learn to read is impeded in equal participation in the educational program" (p. 18). Regardless of the non-mainstream variety, the correlation between speaking a non-mainstream variety and reading failure is not difficult to establish. Thus, a survey of existing research on this topic readily leads to the following conclusion:

> Research certainly shows that there is a correlation between speaking nonstandard varieties and reading failure; that is, the likelihood of reading problems developing is increased if a person is a member of a nonstandard English speaking population. (Wolfram, 1979: 1)

Concluding that there is a correlation between reading failure and speaking a non-mainstream variety must, of course, be differentiated from saying that speaking a nonstandard dialect will necessarily *cause* reading failure. There are many variables that correlate with reading failure, many of which have no apparent relationship with language. The multi-dimensioned nature of reading failure is certainly admitted in Judge Joiner's order (p. 35), and it would be inappropriate to assume that the court concluded that speaking a nonstandard dialect was the sole, or even the prime, variable responsible for the reading

failure of non-mainstream students. In the Ann Arbor decision, it was simply concluded that reading was made more difficult for Black English speaking children for the following reasons:

1. There is a lack of parental or other home support for developing reading skills in standard English, including the absence of persons in the home who read, enjoy it, and profit from it.
2. Students experience difficulty in hearing and making certain sounds used discriminatively in standard English, but not distinguished in the home language system.
3. The unconscious but evident attitude of teachers toward the home language causes a psychological barrier to learning by the student. (pp. 35-36)

Of the three, the first reason appears to have the least supportable research base. (It should, of course, be noted that the absence of research evidence does not necessarily mean that it is, in fact, the least significant, since there is no evidence to the contrary either.) Impressionistically, the situation as described for the Black community in this regard does not differ substantially from that found in other non-mainstream communities. At any rate, this argument does not appear to be crucial in this instance.

The second reason refers to our description of linguistic differences that exist between mainstream and non-mainstream varieties. Certainly, differences in the pronunciation and grammatical systems of a mainstream and non-mainstream variety" may be a cause of superficial difficulties in speaking standard English" (p. 36). While some of the differences are described as superficial in terms of their linguistic content, their cumulative effect may, in fact, be quite substantial. The substantive effect is most readily seen by examining how speakers of a non-mainstream variety might perform on an educational test which does not take the home dialect into account. It is somewhat surprising that the effect of a nonstandard dialect on testing was not discussed in more detail in the Ann Arbor decision, since it offers impressive evidence concerning the cumulative effect of a dialect difference on educational assessment (cf. Vaughn-Cooke in this volume). Language tests may be used for a wide range of purposes, including the assessment of language development for reading readiness, reading assessment, and diagnosis of learning disabilities. In this context, consider the effect of a test which uses only standard English as a norm for correctness, as is the case with most educational tests. For illustrative purposes, we can use a subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA), the "grammatic closure subtest" (Kirk et al., 1968). This subtest is designed to "assess the child's ability to make use of the redundancies of oral language in acquiring automatic habits for handling syntax and grammatical inflections"

(*Examiner's Manual*, 1968:11). Such a battery is often used, among other things, as a basis for establishing reading readiness. In the grammatic closure subtest, the child is asked to produce a missing word as the tester points to a picture. For example, the examiner shows a plate with two pictures on it, one with one bed and the other with two beds. The examiner points to the first picture as he says, "Here is a bed," then points to the second picture and says, "Here are two ____," with the child supplying the missing word. All of the responses must be in standard English in order to be considered correct.

With this background information in mind, consider how the "home dialect" might affect the responses and subsequent assessment based on this test. In this case, we shall look at the systematic divergence that might be expected from Black English and Appalachian English speakers who used their home dialect as the basis for giving an appropriate response. In terms of the rules of their home language, their response would be quite appropriate (i.e. "correct"), but in terms of the standard English norms assumed in the test, their responses would have to be considered "incorrect." In Table 1, the standard English responses considered correct according to the scoring manual are given, along with the systematic differences based on the language rules of Black English or Appalachian English.

Two conclusions can be drawn on the basis of Table 1. First, we see that the cumulative effect of the "home dialect" can be quite substantive. For both Black English and Appalachian English, 24 of the 33 items potentially reflect dialect differences on the basis of the home dialect rules. Second, the substantive effect is quite parallel for Black English and Appalachian English even though the two varieties differ in varying ways from the standard variety of English used as the test norm.

The potential educational effect of the dialect differences is more dramatically revealed when we examine how the raw scores on a test such as the grammatic closure are correlated with "psycholinguistic age norms." Consider the case of a ten-year-old Appalachian English or Black English speaker who applies the rules of his or her home dialect to this task. With a raw score of 8 to 10 correct, the ten-year-old child is diagnosed as having a psycholinguistic age norm of less than five years of age. And the sole basis of this discrepancy was the fact that the child used appropriate dialect forms which the test disallowed. Such a child might be misdiagnosed in terms of reading readiness, language development, and academic potential. Dialect differences, then, can have important implications for a child's educational experience.

With this kind of information in mind, it is easy to see how it might be concluded that the failure to recognize dialect differences can have a harmful effect on a child's educational experience, as was indicated in the decision:

Table 1

ITPA Grammatical Closure Subtest with Comparison of "Correct" Responses and Appalachian and Vernacular Black English Alternant Forms

Stimulus with "Correct" Item According to ITPA Test Manual (Items considered to be "correct" according to the procedures for scoring are italicized.)	Appalachian English Alternant	Vernacular Black English Alternant
1. Here is a dog. Here are two *dogs/doggies*.		dog
2. This cat is under the chair. Where is the cat? She is *on*/(any preposition—other than "under"—indicating location)		
3. Each child has a ball. This is hers, and this is *his*.	his'n	
4. This dog likes to bark. Here he is *barking*.		
5. Here is a dress. Here are two *dresses*.		dress
6. The boy is opening the gate. Here the gate has been *opened*.		open
7. There is milk in this glass. It is a glass *of/with/for/o'/lots of milk*.		
8. This bicycle belongs to John. Whose bicycle is it? It is *John's*.		John
9. This boy is writing something. This is what he *wrote/has written/did write*.	writed/writ has wrote	writed/wrote
10. This is the man's home, and this is where he works. Here he is going to work, and here he is going *home/back home/to his home*.	at home	
11. Here it is night, and here it is morning. He goes to work first thing in the morning, and he goes home first thing *at night*.	of the night	
12. This man is painting. He is a *painter/fence painter*.	a-paintin'	
13. The boy is going to eat all the cookies. Now all the cookies have been *eaten*.	eat/ate/eated/et	ate
14. He wanted another cookie, but there weren't *any/any more*.	none/no more	none/no more
15. This horse is not big. This horse is big. This horse is *even bigger*.	more bigger	more bigger
16. And this horse is the very *biggest*.	most biggest	most biggest
17. Here is a man. Here are two *men/gentlemen*.	mans/mens	mans/mens
18. This man is planting a tree. Here the tree has been *planted*.		
19. This is soap, and these are *soap/bars of soap/more soap*.	soaps	soaps
20. This child has lots of blocks. This child has even *more*.		
21. And this child has the *most*.	mostest	mostest
22. Here is a foot. Here are two *feet*.	foots/feets	foots/feets
23. Here is a sheep. Here are lots of *sheep*.	sheeps	sheeps
24. This cookie is not very good. This cookie is good. This cookie is even *better*.	gooder	gooder
25. And this cookie is the very *best*.	bestest	
26. This man is hanging the picture. Here the picture has been *hung*.	hanged	hanged
27. The thief is stealing the jewels. These are the jewels that he *stole*.	stoled/stealed	stoled/stealed
28. Here is a woman. Here are two *women*.	womans/womens	womans/womens
29. The boy had two bananas. He gave one away and he kept one for *himself*.	hisself	hisself
30. Here is a leaf. Here are two *leaves*.	leafs	leafs
31. Here is a child. Here are three *children*.	childrens	childrens
32. Here is a mouse. Here are two *mice*.	mouses	mouses
33. These children all fell down. He hurt himself, and she hurt herself. They all hurt *themselves*.	theirselves/theirself	theirselves/theyselves theirself/theyself

> . . . the evidence does clearly establish that unless those instructing in reading recognize (1) the existence of a home language used by children in their own community for much of their nonschool communications, and (2) that this home language may be the cause of the superficial difficulties in speaking standard English, great harm will be done. . . . A language barrier develops when teachers, in helping the child switch from the home language ("black English") to standard English, refuse to admit the existence of a language that is the acceptable way of talking in his local community. (p. 36)

The situation we have described here seems to be a general one--one which seems to go beyond Black English in a given locale. The failure to recognize dialect differences in teaching reading can cause the kind of situation described above wherever non-mainstream students use stigmatized dialects of English, whether the dialect be Black English as found in Ann Arbor, Black English in another setting, Appalachian English as found in a rural county of West Virginia, or some other non-mainstream variety of English.

CONCLUSION

In the final judgment, it was determined that the Ann Arbor School Board had not taken the following steps:

> . . . (1) to help the teachers understand the problem; (2) to help provide them with knowledge about the children's use of a "black English" language system; and (3) to suggest ways and means of using that knowledge in teaching the students to read. (p. 32)

In essence, the judgment pointed to a gap between sociolinguistic research evidence and educational application. There existed a body of sociolinguistic knowledge with import for the equitable education of non-mainstream children, and the educational system had ignored it. And the failure to apply such a knowledge base had imposed an educational barrier for students who spoke this non-mainstream variety. Despite some sociolinguists who have accepted the challenge to apply their research in an educational setting, and some educators who have taken it upon themselves to use current knowledge of social dialects in the context of their classroom teaching, the gap still persists. In this regard, Ann Arbor is hardly atypical. Similar situations might be detailed for many contexts where Black English is spoken, and important parallels exist for other non-mainstream speaking groups that do not participate in the educational process in an equitable way.

The legal precedent has now been set, as the Ann Arbor School Board was ordered to submit to the court a plan that identified the exact steps to be taken (1) to help the teachers identify children speaking non-mainstream vernacular and (2) to use that knowledge in teaching students how to read standard English. If this kind of information is relevant for educators at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Ann Arbor, it seems just as relevant for other school settings, including those where Black English is the dominant non-mainstream variety and those where a different non-mainstream variety is in use. Educators in other regions need this kind of information just as much as those in Ann Arbor. The parallels seem too obvious to ignore.

Despite the preceding discussion, I am not calling for a new wave of litigation over the issue of equitable education and non-mainstream dialect speakers. Ultimately, this is an activity in which "losers" and "winners" can become obscured by the time-consuming, costly, embittering process. Hopefully, however, enough school systems will be convinced by the Ann Arbor decision that this is an issue of sufficient magnitude to take it upon themselves to provide the necessary information for teachers. In that way, the time, money, and energy would be invested in assuring that teachers elsewhere have the knowledge base necessary for dealing with dialect diversity in a way that is educationally equitable.

Evaluating the Language of Black English Speakers: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision

Fay Boyd Vaughn-Cooke

INTRODUCTION

The Ann Arbor decision represents a victory for all Black English (BE) speaking students in the public school systems throughout the U.S., for it appears that this decision will force professionals charged with the responsibility of identifying speakers of BE to seriously reconsider and attempt to solve some of the critical problems which arise for such speakers when standardized language assessment tools are used to measure their linguistic ability.

In general, one of the reasons BE speakers obtain low, unrepresentative scores on standard language tests is because such tests count as correct only standard English (SE) responses. When one considers the fact that erroneous results from standardized language tests are being used to determine whether BE speakers should be enrolled in speech therapy and/or special education programs, to compute their IQs, and to help shape their teachers' attitudes, one should be able to perceive immediately the crisis that the language assessment situation creates for these speakers.

The goal of this paper is to examine the judge's decision in the Ann Arbor case and to show why it has the potential of forcing a resolution to at least some of the problems that arise when standardized language evaluation tools are used to assess the linguistic ability of BE speakers. First I will discuss the decision and then attempt to illuminate the problems.

THE ANN ARBOR DECISION

In January of 1979, a lawsuit was filed in Ann Arbor, Michigan on behalf of 11 Black children, which charged that the Ann Arbor School District violated federal law because it failed to address the language barrier (Black English) encountered by the plaintiff children.

The law cited by the attorneys for the plaintiffs was Title 20 of the United States Code, Section 1703(f) which states:

> No State shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by--
> * * *
> (f) the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs. (Cited in Kaimowitz and Lewis, 1979:22)

After reviewing the testimony from a number of linguists and other educators, U.S. District Judge Charles W. Joiner, in his Memorandum Opinion and Order (Civil Action No. 7-71861, U.S. District Court, East District, Detroit, Michigan) ordered the following:

> Counsel for the defendant [Ann Arbor School District] is directed to submit to this court within thirty (30) days a proposed plan *defining the exact steps to be taken* (1) to help the teachers of the plaintiff children at King School to identify children speaking "black English" and the language spoken as a home or community language, and (2) to use that knowledge in teaching such students how to read standard English. (p. 42)

The first part of Judge Joiner's ruling is most relevant for this paper, as it requires the development of a set of steps that will help teachers to *identify* BE speakers, a process which must involve an evaluation of the speaker's language. It is my contention that the ruling will force professionals involved in the identification process to rigorously scrutinize all potential evaluation tools before including them as part of the identification procedure. Many standardized tests that are well known and widely used will, fortunately for BE speakers, be excluded, for in addition to yielding invalid assessments of linguistic competence, they also contain procedures for computing intelligence quotients, or, more correctly, invalid intelligence quotients. It is no secret that major educational placement decisions, which can sometimes affect children for the rest of their lives, are often based on, or at least influenced by, the results from invalid tests. Thus, an event which has the power to focus attention on the crisis that the results of most language evaluation tests created for BE speakers is indeed a welcome one.

The question is, which language assessment tools have the capacity to provide a valid evaluation of BE? The following sections will attempt to answer this question first by specifying the goals of a "valid evaluation," then by proposing a set of guidelines which can be used as criteria for determining whether

a particular tool can yield a valid evaluation. Finally, some commonly used language assessment tools will be evaluated within the framework of the proposed guidelines and the results of these evaluations will be discussed.

GOALS OF A VALID LANGUAGE EVALUATION

A valid evaluation is one which can reveal, describe, and project as normal the linguistic rules (e.g. phonological, grammatical) characteristic of a speaker's dialect.[1] In addition, it should be able to reveal, describe, and specify the uncharacteristic, unpredictable, and unacceptable rules which provide evidence for language disorders.

Predictably, some speakers who exhibit dialect differences also exhibit language disorders.[2] For instance, BE speakers may simplify consonant clusters in word-final position (e.g. past may be pronounced as pas), but this would be normal given the rules of their phonological system. In addition, the same speakers may simplify the st consonant cluster in word-initial position (e.g. stop may be pronounced as top), but unlike the first simplification, this latter one should be considered deviant, for it violates the rule which governs the production of initial st in BE. When an evaluation tool is not designed to account for such facts regarding the phonology of BE, one of the following decisions could be made: (a) the speakers' pronunciation of past (e.g. pas) could be viewed as deviant, and they could be recommended for speech therapy with the goal of teaching them to produce final st clusters; (b) the speakers' pronunciation of both past and stop could be viewed as deviant, and they could be recommended for speech therapy, the goal being to teach them to produce initial and final st clusters; (c) the speakers' pronunciations of both past and stop could be viewed as dialect differences, and they would not be recommended for therapy. However, a, b, and c are all possible but incorrect decisions for the case being discussed. An evaluation tool which is designed to account for the facts of BE phonology would yield decision (d): the speakers' pronunciation of past represents a dialect difference which is normal, but their pronunciation of stop represents a phonological disorder, and thus they should be recommended for speech therapy. Such therapy of course would focus on the linguistic disorder (failure to produce initial st clusters), but not on the linguistic difference (failure to produce final st clusters).

Professionals charged with the responsibility of evaluating the linguistic systems of BE speakers will on some occasions face a dual challenge. This will involve identifying and describing language differences which represent normal and expected patterns and language disorders which represent deviant and unexpected patterns. Unfortunately, the majority of the presently available language evaluation tools cannot help the professional accomplish the tasks underlying this. In fact, the next section

will illustrate that most tools actually *prevent* the professional from accomplishing these tasks.

EVALUATING LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

One way to determine whether a particular language evaluation tool has the capacity to provide a valid evaluation of a BE speaker's linguistic system is first to evaluate the potential tool, utilizing a fairly rigorous set of guidelines based on sociolinguistic research. If the tool receives a high rating, then it could be considered for use, but if a low rating is revealed, professionals should refrain from utilizing the measure, even if it is the only one available in their speech clinic or school district.[3]

This section will evaluate seven available language assessment devices according to the criteria set forth in six proposed guidelines. The specific tools include: The Houston Test of Language Development (HTLD) (Crabtree, 1963); The Utah Test of Language Development (UTLD) (Mecham et al., 1967); The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) (Dunn, 1965); The Bankson Language Screening Test (BLST) (Bankson, 1977); The Grammatic Closure Subtest (GCS) of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (Kirk et al., 1968); the Developmental Sentence Scoring Procedure (DSS) (Lee, 1974); and the Content, Form and Use Analysis (CFUA) (Bloom and Lahey, 1978).

A fairly detailed description of two of the above measures, the GCS and the CFUA, will be provided here (descriptions of the other five tools appear in the Appendix). The proposed guidelines, expressed in the form of questions, and the discussion of the results of the evaluation of the seven assessment devices will follow the tool descriptions.

The Grammatic Closure Subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities. The ITPA is a comprehensive assessment device that was developed within the framework of Osgood's (1957) model of communication. It consists of 12 subtests, but only one, grammatic closure, will be focused on here.

According to Kirk et al. (1968:11), the GCS was designed to assess the child's ability to make use of the redundancies of oral language in acquiring automatic habits for handling syntax and grammatical inflections. The subtest includes 33 sentence completion tasks which elicit responses that can reveal information about a child's knowledge of the morphological rules of SE. The presentation of the completion tasks is accompanied by a picture which represents the specific form being elicited; for example, the examiner points to a picture of one bed and says, "Here is a bed," then points to a picture of two beds and says, "Here are two ___." The expected response is beds.

The remaining completion tasks are constructed to elicit irregular plural markers (e.g. mice, children, soap); regular past

tense markers (e.g. opened); irregular past tense markers (e.g. hung, wrote); prepositional forms (e.g. on, to, at); pronominal forms (e.g. the reflexive pronouns himself and themselves and the possessive pronoun his); the possessive marker (e.g. John's); the comparative marker (e.g. bigger); the superlative marker (e.g. biggest); a nominalization marker (e.g. painter); and the negative marker (e.g. any).

The Content, Form and Use Analysis. The CFUA is not a test but a procedure for analyzing a spontaneous language sample. Underlying the procedure is the notion that language involves interactions among three major components: language content, language form, and language use. The content of language, in the words of Bloom and Lahey, is "its meaning or semantics--the linguistic representation of what persons know about the world of objects, events and relations" (1978:14). Language form is the code (signs, sounds, words, and larger units like sentences) used to express meaning. "Language use consists of the socially and cognitively determined selection of behaviors according to the goals of the speaker and the context of the situation" (Bloom and Lahey, 1978:20).

The goals for assessing language which emanate from the content, form, use interactions framework are to (1) describe the content of children's language, (2) describe the linguistic forms used to express content, and (3) describe the way in which children "use forms to talk about ideas of the world and to interact with other persons" (p. 372). In order to achieve these goals, specific steps must be followed when collecting and preparing the data to be analyzed and when performing the multi-focused analysis of the language sample.

During the collection of the language sample, the context in which utterances are produced should be carefully observed and recorded. For example, the investigator should note not only what the children say but also what they do and what other persons are saying and doing when they are interacting with them. This expanded set of data is used as evidence to support hypotheses regarding meaning and function in the children's system.

After collecting and transcribing the language sample, utterances which contain at least two of the major grammatical constituents, subject-verb-complement, are first classified according to the content categories of their verb relations. The latter include the action relation (e.g. Gia ride bike); the locative action relation (e.g. mommy in this bed); the locative state relation (e.g. there's a bed); the state relation (e.g. he tired); and the existence relation (this mom). Utterances are also examined to determine whether they code other content categories (e.g. nonexistence, rejection, denial, recurrence, attribution, possession, and causality).

The form analysis involves determining the type and number of grammatical constituents that are included in an utterance. This evidence is then used to determine whether a content category is productive (i.e. represents systematic behavior) at a particular phase of language development. The number of constituents observed in an utterance is also compared with the number expected in the adult model in order to determine achievement. (Productivity and achievement criteria were established by the authors.)

The use component of the procedure involves analyzing a child's language according to the way in which utterances were used. The investigator is instructed to note whether utterances initiated by the child represent a response to a question or a response to a statement. In addition, the function of each utterance should be specified (i.e. whether the utterance was used to comment, demand, pretend, etc.), and inappropriate responses to questions and statements should be noted.

The results of the content, form, and use analysis provide a description of the child's language system which can be used to determine whether it is developing normally.

Guideline 1: Can the Procedure Account for Language Variation? Perhaps this is the first question that a professional should ask when selecting a tool for evaluating the linguistic system of a BE speaker. If the answer is no, and if the tool cannot be adapted to account for language differences, it should be declared invalid and withdrawn from consideration by the potential user. A comparison of the GCS correct responses with possible BE responses provides an outstanding example of the penalty BE speakers can pay when inappropriate tests are used to evaluate their language (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that it is possible for 23 of the 33 responses from BE speakers to be counted as incorrect given the scoring requirements of the GCS. The examiner could be led to conclude that the BE speakers have not acquired the concepts of plurality, past tense, possession, and so on. This, of course, would be incorrect, for they *have* acquired these concepts; they simply do not use the SE markers for coding such concepts. Such an observation is critical, for if speakers have not acquired concepts, they should be enrolled in language therapy. On the other hand, if speakers have acquired the concepts, but code them with BE forms, their responses should be viewed as normal, and therapy would be highly inappropriate.

The GCS is not unique in its failure to account for dialect differences. Most assessment tools ignore language variation when specifying which forms are acceptable as evidence for a speaker's knowledge of specific language concepts. This is true also for the UTLD, the HTLD, the BLST, and the DSS. When commenting on the appropriateness of the use of the DSS with specific linguistic groups, the author pointed out that the procedure is "appropriate only for children learning standard

Table 1

ITPA Grammatical Closure Subtest with Comparison of "Correct" Responses and Appalachian and Vernacular Black English Alternant Forms

Stimulus with "Correct" Item According to ITPA Test Manual (Items considered to be "correct" according to the procedures for scoring are italicized.)	Appalachian English Alternant	Vernacular Black English Alternant
1. Here is a dog. Here *are two dogs/doggies*.		dog
2. This cat is under the chair. Where is the cat? She is *on/*(any preposition—other than "under"—indicating location).		
3. Each child has a ball. This is hers, and this is *his*.	his'n	
4. This dog likes to bark. Here he is *barking*.		
5. Here is a dress. Here *are two dresses*.		dress
6. The boy is opening the gate. Here the gate has been *opened*.		open
7. There is milk in this glass. It is a glass *of/with/for/o'/lots of milk*.		
8. This bicycle belongs to John. Whose bicycle is it? It is *John's*.		John
9. This boy is writing something. This is what he *wrote/has written/did write*.	writed/writ has wrote	writed/wrote
10. This is the man's home, and this is where he works. Here he is going to work, and there he is going *home/back home/to his home*.	at home	
11. Here it is night, and here it is morning. He goes to work first thing in the morning, and he goes home first thing *at night*.	of the night	
12. This man is painting. He is a *painter/fence painter*.	a-paintin'	
13. The boy is going to eat all the cookies. Now all the cookies have been *eaten*.	eat/ate/eated/et	ate
14. He wanted another cookie, but there weren't *any/any more*.	none/no more	none/no more
15. This horse is not big. This horse is big. This horse is *even bigger*.	more bigger	more bigger
16. And this horse is the very *biggest*.	most biggest	most biggest
17. Here is a man. Here *are two men/gentlemen*.	mans/mens	mans/mens
18. This man is planting a tree. Here the tree has been *planted*.		
19. This is soap, and these *are soap/bars of soap/more soap*.	soaps	soaps
20. This child has lots of blocks. This child has *even more*.		
21. And this child has the *most*.	mostest	mostest
22. Here is a foot. Here *are two feet*.	foots/feets	foots/feets
23. Here is a sheep. Here are lots of *sheep*.	sheeps	sheeps
24. This cookie is not very good. This cookie is good. This cookie is *even better*.	gooder	gooder
25. And this cookie is the very *best*.	bestest	
26. This man is hanging the picture. Here the picture has been *hung*.	hanged	hanged
27. The thief is stealing the jewels. These are the jewels that he *stole*.	stoled/stealed	stoled/stealed
28. Here is a woman. Here are *two women*.	womans/womens	womans/womens
29. The boy had two bananas. He gave one away and he kept one for *himself*.	hisself	hisself
30. Here is a leaf. Here are *two leaves*.	leafs	leafs
31. Here is a child. Here are *three children*.	childrens	childrens
32. Here is a mouse. Here are *two mice*.	mouses	mouses
33. These children all fell down. He hurt himself, and she hurt herself. They all hurt *themselves*.	theirselves/theirself	theirselves/theyselves theirself/theyself

American-English grammar" (Lee, 1974:xix). While this statement protects speakers of other dialects from having the forms characteristic of their dialects evaluated according to the DSS standard English norms, it also serves as a rationale for maintaining this unnecessary limitation. Studies of BE, Appalachian English, and Puerto Rican English have described some of the features unique to these varieties. Thus, it is possible to adapt a procedure so that it will be appropriate for examinees who speak dialects other than SE. When adaptations are not provided, the title of the test should reflect the fact that it is appropriate only for a select group of speakers. For example, because of its focus, the GCS should be called the SE Grammatic Closure Subtest. Such a title would boldly indicate that it should not be used to evaluate the morphological systems of nonstandard speakers.

Most language tests do not provide methods for handling dialect variations. This is based on the false assumption that knowledge of a language does not involve knowing linguistic forms in the universal sense, but rather involves knowing a *particular* variety of forms. If valid assessment tools are to be developed, language will have to be viewed from a more universal perspective; that is, test constructors will have to be more concerned about whether a child has acquired concepts like negation, possession, causality, plurality, etc. and less concerned about the specific variety of forms that are used to code such concepts.

Guideline 2: Are the Assumptions about Language Which Underlie the Procedure Valid Ones? Before constructing a language evaluation tool, the researcher at some point must ask the basic question: what does it mean to know a language? That is, what do speakers have to know before one can conclude that they know language A or language B? Linguistic research has shown that to know a language involves four aspects: (1) knowing the concepts which represent the objects, the events, and the relationships in the world; (2) knowing the linguistic forms which code these concepts; (3) knowing the set of rules (phonological and syntactic) which govern the possible combinations of forms; and (4) knowing the set of rules which govern the use of linguistic forms. If all or some of the assumptions about what it means to know a language are invalid, this fundamental shortcoming will be reflected in the evaluation tool, rendering it incapable of providing a valid language evaluation.

Do the seven assessment tools meet this basic guideline? Three of the tests, the UTLD, the HTLD, and the PPVT, fail in all aspects. And none of these tests provides a systematic procedure for evaluating linguistic concepts, for evaluating major rules which govern the combination of forms that code concepts, or for evaluating rules which govern the use of forms.

Twenty-two percent of the items on the HTLD are totally unrelated to revealing linguistic knowledge as represented in

studies of child and adult language. Consider, for example, Item 16, which requires the children to draw pictures.[5] Their performance on this item is ultimately used to help make a general statement about their language development. Other blatantly inappropriate items include Item 15, which requires the child to construct geometric designs; Item 14, which requires the child to repeat melody patterns; Items 11 and 12, which involve counting; and Item 4, which involves gesturing. The inclusion of such items indicates that the assumptions about linguistic knowledge which underlie this test are invalid.

As shown below, 39% of the items included in the UTLD are irrelevant to an assessment of linguistic ability.

Item	Task Required
3	Mark with a pencil or crayon
19	Say a nursery rhyme from memory in the correct sequence
20	Copy a cross
26	Copy a square
29	Identify (by naming) a penny, nickel, and dime
30	Write numbers to 30
31	Tell a familiar story
32	Read words on pre-primer level
33	Recite numbers from one to 50
34	Copy a diamond
36	Identify (by naming) a quarter, a half-dollar, and a dollar
37	Repeat five digits
38	Name the days of the week
40	Write cursively with a pencil
41	Rhyme words
42	Repeat four digits reversed
44	Repeat six digits
46	Repeat five digits reversed
49	Repeat a difficult sentence from knowledge
51	Answer questions regarding direction

Children's performance on the above tasks will not provide specific and direct information about their knowledge of language. Speakers may know the basic rules of their language, yet not be able to successfully complete any of the tasks described above. The point is that while the majority of the items included in the UTLD can be used to measure something, this something is not linguistic knowledge.

When the PPVT is examined within the framework of the first aspect of Guideline 2, one is quickly led to the conclusion that the basic assumptions about language which underlie this tool, like the devices described above, are invalid. The test attempts to assess a speaker's receptive knowledge of the lexicon (vocabulary). This goal was not achieved because the selection of

lexical items which make up the device was not based on principles which govern the order in which certain classes of words are acquired during the course of a child's development. While little is known about the details of lexical growth, research in language acquisition (Nelson, 1973; Lahey and Bloom, 1977) has shown that very young children use relational words (e.g. more, all gone, no) as well as substantive words (e.g. dog, cat, man) like those included in the PPVT. The former class of words code very important semantic notions in language and thus should be considered when evaluating a child's lexicon. The lexicon, then, is not just a set of isolated words but a set of forms which code meaning, and when a child's vocabulary is not examined from this perspective, the results are likely to be unrevealing and misleading.

As we noted previously, the GCS contains items which can reveal information about SE speakers' knowledge of the morphological rules of their language. When evaluated according to this second aspect, the items provide evidence that the specific assumptions underlying this device are upheld by child language research; that is, at certain stages in their development children learning SE acquire the rules which generate appropriate morphological markers.

I noted during the discussion of Guideline 1 that the inability of the GCS to account for dialect variation constitutes a major shortcoming; in addition one should be aware of the narrow focus of this tool. For instance, the test is constructed to assess only the speaker's knowledge of grammatical morphemes. While a general evaluation should include an assessment of these structures, it should also include a procedure which can assess some of the earlier acquired knowledge as evidenced by the one-word stage of language development. The point is that if a speaker fails the GCS, the evaluator will have determined what the speaker does not know with respect to grammatical morphemes. However, the task of determining what the speaker does know, with respect to some of the other components (e.g. concepts and major syntactic rules) of language, remains to be determined.

I will now consider the validity of the assumptions underlying the BLST, the DSS, and the CFUA. As the description in the Appendix indicates, the BLST is divided into five parts. Parts I, II, and III assess aspects of semantic, morphological, and syntactic knowledge respectively. All of the tasks included in these sections, with the exception of those which focus on colors, are appropriate for assessing specific aspects of language development. However, the tasks included in Parts IV and V, which focus on visual and auditory perception respectively, are not directly relevant to assessing linguistic ability. According to the test constructor, the visual perception tasks were included because "clinicians frequently utilize visual stimuli in the remediation of receptive and expressive language problems," and because "children referred for oral language evaluations are often

those who eventually are found to have disabilities in the area of written language"; therefore, according to the author, "screening allows for early detection of those [children] needing an educational evaluation" (Bankson, 1977:2).

When the scope of a test is expanded to include assessment of areas other than language, then the children's performance on the non-language items should not be considered when evaluating their linguistic knowledge. Also, it is misleading to refer to a tool as a language screening test when it includes an assessment of non-language abilities. The results of the evaluation based on Guideline 2 indicate that some of the linguistic assumptions underlying the BLST are valid and some are not.

Lee's DSS technique provides a procedure for analyzing eight grammatical categories--indefinite pronouns, personal pronouns, main verbs, secondary verbs, negative forms, conjunctions, interrogative reversal in questions, and wh-questions. The general theory underlying this method is consistent with accounts of grammatical acquisition, i.e. children acquire specific forms at certain points in their development. Overall, the basic assumptions about language reflected in this procedure are valid.

The assumptions underlying Bloom and Lahey's Content, Form and Use Analysis emanate from careful descriptions of linguistic behavior. The purpose of the analysis is to obtain information regarding a child's knowledge of the content, the form, and use of language. The comprehensive goals of the CFUA are based on thorough and valid linguistic assumptions.

Before closing this section some remarks are appropriate regarding the concept of validity as it was used in the preceding discussion. There I was referring to the content validity of language tests. Specifically, I was concerned with whether the items in an assessment tool are appropriate for measuring what it claims to be measuring. To reveal whether a test exhibits content validity, one must first explicitly define the behavior to be assessed and then examine the specific items in order to determine whether they are appropriate for assessing the target behavior.

As I indicated in the above discussion, the items on four of the standardized tests provide clear evidence that language (or some aspect of the latter)--the behavior that the tests claim to be assessing--has been inadequately defined. We have seen that inadequate definitions give rise to invalid content; it should be noted, however, that the standardized tests evaluated in this section purport to be valid assessment devices. For example, according to Bankson, "content validity of the BLST is based upon the fact that the items included in the instrument were selected as representative of the kinds of tasks that language clinicians assess and remediate" (Bankson, 1977:4). He states further that, "a review of pre-school and primary grade academic curricula would reflect the knowledge and skills measured in [the BLST]" (Bankson, 1977:4). Note that Bankson's criteria

for establishing content validity exclude a sound definition of language--the behavior to be screened. Thus, it is not surprising that the device contains many inappropriate items for evaluating linguistic knowledge.

This latter comment is also relevant to the claims Dunn makes regarding the content validity of the PPVT. Dunn contends that "content validity was built into the [PPVT] when a complete search was made of *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (G&C Merriam, 1953) for all words whose meaning could be depicted by a picture. The restriction was the omission of words which could not be illustrated" (Dunn, 1965:32). The test constructor notes further that "since a good cross section was obtained of words in common use today in the United States, and since care was taken to keep the final selection of response and decoy items unbiased, the final product is assumed to meet adequate standards for a picture vocabulary test" (Dunn, 1965:32). It is clear that the validity criteria excluded a very important component, that is, a definition of lexical knowledge. As noted above, one must first determine what speakers must know before an assessor can conclude that they know the vocabulary of their language. As can be expected, only an invalid description of the behavior will evolve from an invalid evaluation tool.

The authors of the HTLD and the UTLD do not discuss whether these tools meet any criteria for establishing content validity; however, both test constructors describe validation procedures. Crabtree (1963) reports that the validity of the HTLD was based on a reliable difference of the percents passing from one age to the next. Mecham et al. (1967) state that "validity of the [UTLD] was checked by the method of calibration." They also contend that "since all items of the scale had been selected previously from standardized sources, it was felt that the items had good 'face' validity." As these comments indicate, no attempts were made to validate the content of the UTLD or the HTLD. Content validity is of primary importance for tools which assess knowledge (as opposed to predicting some future behavior); thus, when language tests cannot provide evidence for content validity, their reliability and concurrent validity become irrelevant features.

Guideline 3: Does the Procedure Include an Analysis of a Spontaneous Speech Sample (when an oral system is used to communicate)? While a comprehensive evaluation of a speaker's language may include an examination of some controlled elicited responses like those extracted by the GCS, an analysis of a sample of spontaneous speech should be performed for every testee who uses oral language to communicate. Linguistic research has convincingly shown that a representative language sample is a necessary component of an evaluation process if an adequate description of one's linguistic ability is to be obtained. Thus, an assessment tool like the PPVT, which does not require

the testee to talk (to produce linguistic forms), should never serve as the sole indicator of a child's knowledge of language. Of the seven tools being evaluated, only the DSS and the CFUA include procedures for analyzing a spontaneous speech sample. If the other five tools are to be utilized at all, they should be used only in conjunction with procedures that do require an analysis of a language sample.

While the language sample is an important component of the evaluation process, the framework in which it will be analyzed is equally important. The framework proposed in the CFUA differs substantively from that proposed for analyzing the syntactic complexity of the spontaneous speech elicited by the HTLD. The CFUA provides specific procedures for describing the content of language, the forms which code content, and the way in which forms are used in a speaker's language, while the HTLD provides a set of unprincipled expectations about the types of syntactic constructions three-, four-, five-, and six-year-olds will produce. Consider the following criteria (Crabtree, 1963) for assigning credit for the testee's spontaneous utterances.

Age	Criteria
3 years	uses phrases
4 years	uses incorrect sentences
5 years	simple statement of fact--complete sentences
6 years	develops a sequence by the use of a theme or a plot

These criteria clearly show that the framework for analyzing syntax is grossly inadequate and incapable of providing an accountable description of a child's syntactic abilities. Thus, analyzing a language sample according to these criteria or similar false assumptions underlying the analytical framework becomes a fruitless exercise.

Guideline 4: Can the Procedure Reliably Indicate Whether a System is Developing Normally? In order for an assessment tool to indicate whether a system is developing normally, it must provide a method for evaluating the order in which specific linguistic knowledge appears in a speaker's system. For example, studies of phonological acquisition have shown that stops (/t/, /d/) are generally acquired before homorganic fricatives (/s/, /z/); thus one would predict that if speakers could produce fricatives, they should also be able to produce stops. Violations of expected patterns often provide evidence of deviant development.

In addition to considering the order in which knowledge is acquired, an assessment procedure should also be concerned about the age at which linguistic information is acquired. Studies have shown a fairly wide range of variation with respect to age of

acquisition. For example, Adam, Sarah, and Eve, discussed by Brown (1973), acquired the present progressive marker at the ages of 2;6, 2;10, and 1;9 respectively. Overall, the findings of language acquisition research indicate a near invariant order with respect to the acquisition of linguistic knowledge; however, extensive variation in the age at which specific knowledge is acquired has been reported. A reliable statement regarding when a child is expected to exhibit certain linguistic information should be based on observations of a fairly large number of children.

When the above question is asked regarding the HTLD, the UTLD, the PPVT, and the GCS, it must be answered negatively, for none of these tools systematically addresses the issues regarding order and time of acquisition of linguistic knowledge. The results of the CFUA can be compared with some well-documented findings related to the order in which language abilities are acquired, particularly during the early phases of development. Because a limited number of studies have focused on the later stages, a less reliable order could be proposed. In general, though, the issue of order is a central concern of the CFUA. No reliable statements regarding time of acquisition are possible within the framework of this tool, for the principles underlying it are based on data from a fairly small population of children.

Reliable statements about the order and time of acquisition of the eight grammatical categories assessed by the DSS can be made, for predictions about the sequence in which categories are required and the age at which they are acquired are based on the speech samples of 200 middle class White children between the ages of 2;0 and 6;11.

As the characteristics of the norming population indicate, such predictions would only be relevant for middle class White children. Reliable statements regarding the order and time of acquisition of linguistic knowledge by working-class Black speakers are at this point impossible to make, for the relevant research is either still in progress or remains to be conducted. This absence of critical normative data seriously undermines the validity of the evaluation process for BE speakers. Consider the case of a three-year-old BE speaker who uses only two-word utterances to communicate. Should language intervention be recommended or is this normal? The evidence needed to answer this basic question is simply not available. The evaluator can examine the data on White middle class children and use it as a basis for making predictions about the linguistic development of a Black working-class child, but needless to say, such predictions could be totally wrong.

Guideline 5: Can the Results of the Procedure Provide Principled Guidelines for Language Intervention? If the first guideline cannot be met, that is, if the fundamental assumptions underlying the tool are not valid, then no basis will exist for developing

principled intervention procedures when appropriate. Consider, for example, the lack of direction that the PPVT provides for language intervention. Although the examiner can calculate the testee's intelligence quotient, percentile score, and mental age, the results of the test do not provide any theoretically supported suggestions regarding which vocabulary items should be taught at different stages in a speaker's intervention program. The above comments are also relevant for the HTLD and the UTLD. For example, if a group of four-year-old children use only two-word utterances, how will information regarding their reading and writing skills aid in the construction of a language intervention program? Obviously such skills are not directly relevant to the task of expanding the length of the children's utterances.

Evaluation of the GCS within the framework of this question shows that while this subtest can reveal the specific morphological rules that have not been acquired by an SE speaker, no recommendations are provided regarding the order in which unacquired rules should be taught. It has been observed (Brown, 1973) that the grammatical morphemes appear in a certain order, and this order should be considered when intervention goals are being developed.

An examination of the DSS indicated that a general developmental sequence had been specified for the eight grammatical categories and their subcategories. A serious shortcoming of this sequence, however, is that its relationship to the developmental sequence of other grammatical categories, specifically those which have been excluded from the DSS procedure (adverbs, grammatical morphemes, and embedded sentences), is not discussed. Thus, if a speaker exhibits problems with both personal pronouns and prepositions, no recommendations regarding their ordering for language teaching are presented.

This guideline can be easily met by the CFUA, for Bloom and Lahey view their procedure as a subpart of an overall plan for language intervention. According to these investigators, the plan consists of three parts:

> a description of the language behaviors that are a part of language learning, a sequence of these behaviors based on normal development, which represents an hypothesis about the order in which they can best be learned . . . and a means for determining which behaviors, or rules, are an established part of the child's system and which are yet to be learned. (Bloom and Lahey, 1978:439)

The goal of the CFUA is to reveal what the examinee knows and does not know about the target linguistic system. The major rationale for developing the CFUA procedure was to provide information that could be used to construct principled guidelines for language intervention.

Guideline 6: Can the Procedure Provide an Adequate Description of Some Aspect of the Speaker's Knowledge of Language? Given the enormous complexity of language, it would be unrealistic for a test to attempt to evaluate every aspect of a speaker's linguistic knowledge. An adequate test should have a clearly defined focus; that is, it should be specifically designed to assess the grammatical system, the phonological system, or subcomponents within these systems. The inability of a tool to elicit the appropriate data for revealing a speaker's knowledge about at least one of the components of language generally indicates that false assumptions about the nature of language underlie its theoretical foundation. When the UTLD and HTLD are examined within the framework of this guideline, we see that neither of these tools is capable of eliciting systematic information about a particular subsystem of language. Both tests contain an unfocused collection of items, many of which, as we noted above, elicit behaviors that are totally unrelated to existing descriptions of linguistic knowledge.

While the PPVT focuses on a specific subcomponent of language, the test is incapable of providing an acceptable description of it. Its inability to adequately characterize a speaker's receptive knowledge of the lexical component is due in part to the absence of input from research on lexical growth. A sound hypothesis based on empirical research would provide a principled rationale for the selection of items for a vocabulary test. An arbitrary set of items will only provide an arbitrary and often incorrect description of the speaker's lexical knowledge.

The BLST was not intended to provide detailed descriptions of specific subcomponents of language. The test, as its name indicates, was designed to screen a speaker's knowledge of certain aspects of several linguistic subsystems. For example, items in the syntactic section elicit information regarding knowledge of rules for negation and subject-verb agreement, but evidence for other rules (such as those which govern embedding, conjoining, and question constructions) is not elicited. This test, like other screening devices, can be used during the first phase of an evaluation procedure; however, in order to obtain a complete picture of a child's abilities, more data will have to be collected.

As I noted earlier, the GCS has as its focus the morphological rules of SE. The test has been constructed to provide a fairly comprehensive set of data which can serve as evidence for the acquisition of such rules.

While the DSS does not provide a full description of the grammatical component, information about eight subsystems of this component is revealed. The procedure has the capacity to adequately describe the subsystems that are examined.

The CFUA is capable of providing fairly detailed descriptions of the major aspects of a speaker's semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic knowledge. This procedure is exceptional in that it

provides a method for describing basic pragmatic knowledge, although this method is not as well developed as those utilized for the analysis of the semantic and grammatical systems. For example, specific criteria should be presented to determine whether a response is "appropriate" or "inappropriate." While revisions in the method used to analyze the pragmatic knowledge are needed, even in its present form, it represents a step forward in the area of language assessment.

Summary of the Evaluation Results. Table 2 provides a summary of the results of the evaluation of the seven assessment tools according to the criteria discussed in the above sections.[6]

Consider first the results of the evaluation for the UTLD, the HTLD, and the PPVT. Note that these devices did not meet any of the six proposed guidelines; therefore, they should not be used to assess the linguistic systems of BE speakers or, indeed, the systems of any other speakers, for the results in Table 2 illustrate dramatically that these tests are incapable of yielding valid language evaluations.

Of the remaining four tools, the BLST, the GCS, the DSS, and the CFUA, all fail to meet the requirements of Guideline 1, which means that in their present forms they should not be used to evaluate the language of BE speakers. These tools, however, can be adapted to meet the requirements of this guideline. Such an adaptation would obviously involve, first, expanding the set of acceptable linguistic forms to include those characteristic of BE. The data needed for such an expansion are available in the sociolinguistic literature. For example, Williams and Wolfram (1976) provide a good summary of phonological and grammatical features which have been observed in BE and in other American English dialects. Second, an adaptation should provide a reliable procedure for determining whether the performance of BE speakers is normal, given the rules of their dialect. To my knowledge the data needed for this aspect of an adaptation are not available. Specifically, one would need to know the age at and the order in which BE speakers acquire particular types of linguistic knowledge. Here I am referring to features unique to BE as well as those that this dialect and SE have in common. As I noted earlier, an evaluator could be totally wrong when using findings from research on middle class White children to make predictions regarding the age at and the order in which working-class Black children will acquire a linguistic feature.

The rationale for questioning such predictions is strengthened when one considers the implications of some evidence in the child language literature which indicates that the degree of complexity of a linguistic structure affects the order in which it will be acquired. Slobin (1973) observed, for example, that children bilingual in Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian acquired the grammatical forms which code locative concepts in the Hungarian before they acquired the relevant forms in Serbo-Croatian. In

Table 2

Results of the Evaluation of Seven Assessment Tools According to Some Proposed Guidelines Based on Linguistic Research

Proposed Guidelines	Language Assessment Tools						
	UTLD	HTLD	PPVT	BLST	GCS	DSS	CFUA
(1) The procedure can account for language variation.	–	–	–	+	+	⊕	⊕
(2) The assumptions about language which underlie the procedure are valid.	–	–	–	– +	+	+	+
(3) The procedure includes an analysis of a spontaneous speech sample (when an oral system is used to communicate).	–	–	–	–	–	+	+
(4) The procedure reliably indicates whether a system is developing normally.	–	–	–	–	–	+	+ –
(5) The results of the procedure provide principled guidelines for language intervention.	–	–	–	–	–	– +	+
(6) The procedure can provide an adequate description of some aspect of the child's knowledge of language.	–	–	–	–	+	+	+

UTLD: Utah Test of Language Development
HTLD: Houston Test of Language Development
BLST: Bankson Language Screening Test
PPVT: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
DSS: Developmental Sentence Scoring
CFUA: Content, Form and Use Analysis
GCS: Grammatic Closure Subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities
+ – Some aspects of the test can meet the guideline, others do not.
⊕ The procedure can be adapted to meet this guideline.
– The procedure cannot meet the guideline.
+ The procedure can meet the guideline.

Hungarian only noun inflections are used to code position and direction (e.g. hajo 'boat,' hajoban 'in the boat,' hajotal 'moving away from next to the boat'). But in Serbo-Croatian, these concepts are coded by prepositions *and* noun inflections. Slobin attributes the later coding of locatives in Serbo-Croatian to the relatively more complex structure of the required grammatical forms.

We can also cite an example involving BE and SE. Compare the grammatical structures which code the present progressive in these two dialects: she is walking in SE, with she walking being the parallel structure in BE. The BE structure is less complex syntactically, but the concept underlying it is successfully communicated. The point here is that when the relationship between grammatical complexity and order of acquisition is considered, one would predict, following the principle observed in Slobin's data, that BE speakers will acquire the grammatical coding for the present progressive *before* SE speakers. While this hypothesis remains to be tested, the specific example illuminates problems that can arise when language evaluators attempt to make decisions when the fundamental research on which they should be based is absent.

To summarize, given the state of knowledge about BE (i.e. knowledge about its structure and knowledge regarding when and in what order speakers acquire this structure) adaptations, at this point, of the four tools mentioned above can only involve expanding the set of acceptable linguistic forms to include BE structures. While such an expansion would constitute a major step forward, it is important to point out that the goal of providing a valid assessment of the language of BE speakers still remains unattainable, for without critical language acquisition data, the evaluator is reduced to guessing and speculating about whether a Black working-class speaker's (particularly a preschooler's) linguistic performance is normal.

We can return now to further consideration of the four tools that I would recommend adapting for BE speakers. It should be noted that according to the results in Table 2, the CFUA emerged as the superior tool. (The reasons for this superiority were discussed in detail in other sections and are summarized in Table 2.) There are cases, however, in which the use of the CFUA would not be recommended. Before discussing these, it will be helpful to reexamine the goals (see pp. 26-27) of a valid evaluation, i.e. to reveal, describe, and project as normal the linguistic rules of a speaker's dialect, and to reveal, describe, and specify any uncharacteristic, unpredictable, and unacceptable rules which provide evidence for language disorders.

If the only objective of the evaluation is to attain the first goal, that is, if the evaluator's sole purpose is to identify the dialect spoken by a particular speaker, then to evaluate the language according to the guidelines of the CFUA would be time consuming and unnecessary. This tool, as we noted earlier,

contains procedures for evaluating language content (concepts), language form, and language use. When the speakers' language is being examined for the purpose of identifying the features of their dialect, then the major focus should be on linguistic form and not on content or use, for sociolinguistic research has shown that the major U.S. dialects exhibit the greatest systematic differences in their form components. A form analysis which is conducted for identification purposes would differ sharply from the one proposed by Bloom and Lahey, which involves determining the type and number of grammatical constituents (subject, verb, and complement) that are included in an utterance. The goal of the analysis is to reveal whether the speakers are coding language concepts with grammatical forms that exhibit the complexity predicted for their age level. In contrast, the form analysis that should be performed for identification purposes would involve analyzing a language sample according to the methodological guidelines of sociolinguistic theory. Specifically, the procedure involves:

Step 1: Collecting a language sample. A 30-minute (or longer) spontaneous sample of the speaker's language should be taperecorded and transcribed.

Step 2: Identifying and tabulating all actual and potential occurrences of BE (or any other dialect's) grammatical and phonological features appearing in the sample.

In order to meet the requirements underlying Step 2, the analyst must be able to identify all of the features of BE. Williams and Wolfram (1976) list a total of 21 features, but this figure does not capture the structural detail that an evaluator would need to know before beginning the analysis. Consider, for example, the different realizations of the voiced and voiceless th sounds in BE.

Word initial realizations

Voiced th can be realized as d.	dey, dem, dese (they, them, these)
Voiceless th can be realized as an unaspirated t.	tought (thought)

Word internal realizations

Voiceless th can be realized as f.	nofin (nothing) aufuh (author)
Voiced th can be realized as v.	bruvah (brother) ravah (rather)
th contiguous to a nasal can be realized as t.	montly (monthly) 'ritmetic (arithmetic)

Voiced th can also be realized as d.	oder (other) bruder (brother)

Word final realizations

Voiceless th can be realized as f.	Ruf (Ruth) toof (tooth)
Voiceless th can also be realized as t.	sout (south)

The examples above illustrate that an analysis must be able to go beyond the general observation that voiced and voiceless th are realized differently in BE. It must be able to capture the fact that a specific subset of realizations occur systematically in different phonological environments.

In addition to noting all instances in which a particular feature occurs, it is equally important to note all instances in which the feature could have occurred but did not. Suppose, for example, that copula absence (e.g. she late) is observed in a language sample. The evaluator should count all instances in which the structure is absent and all instances in which it is present (e.g. she is late). These figures should be totaled, and the frequency of copula absence can then be computed by dividing the number of times the copula was absent by the sum of copula absence and presence. If, for example, the copula was absent eight times, but present 12 times, the percentage of copula absence would be 40.

This simple arithmetic procedure allows the analyst to capture a very important fact about BE in particular and languages in general. Here we are referring to language variation, an inherent feature of language which is represented by the alternation between two linguistic forms (e.g. she late ~ she is late). In the case of the copula in BE, the presence of this structure, is, alternates with zero, or the absence of this form. If the analytical framework employed cannot capture this alternation when it occurs, then the evaluator will be led to conclude (erroneously) that either the speakers of this dialect *always* use the copula or that they *never* use this structure. A speaker's variable production of a structure should be seriously considered by researchers attempting to determine how the use of BE features affects the acquisition of SE reading and writing skills. For example, if a speaker exhibits copula presence 60% of the time and copula absence 40% of the time, what affect will the variable occurrence of this structure have on learning to read?

Once the analysis of the language sample has been completed, that is, when the observed features of BE have been extracted and when their frequencies of occurrence have been computed, the evaluator should communicate the results of the analysis to the speaker's reading teacher. This knowledge can be utilized,

as Judge Joiner ordered in the Ann Arbor case, when teaching students to read SE.

The evaluator should not waste time trying to set up categorical criteria for classifying or not classifying someone as a BE speaker, for the goal of the evaluation should be to identify those speakers who exhibit structural features characteristic of BE. If we rely on available research, the possible range of features which can be exhibited extends from 1 to at least 23. The issue of how many features the speakers' dialect contains should be considered, but only for the purpose of predicting the extent to which the speakers' language variety will affect their acquisition of reading skills.

To summarize, there are two recommended procedures that can be utilized to analyze the language of a BE speaker. These include an adapted version of Bloom and Lahey's CFUA and the basic sociolinguistic procedures that have been described in variation studies (c.f., for example, Labov, 1972; Wolfram, 1969; Fasold, 1972; Vaughn-Cooke, 1976).[7] The selection of one of the two procedures should be based on the general goal of the analysis. If the evaluator's aim is to describe a language disorder, then an analysis according to the guidelines of an adapted CFUA would be appropriate. However, if the goal is to reveal the features of a speaker's dialect, then the methodological framework of the sociolinguistic procedure would be more appropriate. It is possible that in some cases an evaluator will utilize both procedures. Here I am referring to cases involving BE speakers who exhibit language disorders. For these speakers, the goal would be a dual one: to describe the nature of the disorder and to reveal the dialect differences.

Before concluding, it is important to point out that the problem of evaluating the language of the BE speaker is, indeed, not a new one. Aspects of this problem were first considered and discussed more than a decade ago: the issue of a valid evaluation for BE speakers was one of the central concerns of the difference-deficit debate that raged in the late 60s and early 70s. Proponents of the difference theory utilized descriptive sociolinguistic research to support their claim that BE speakers exhibited dialect differences as opposed to language deficits. Their aim was to refute the proposals of the deficit theorists who contended that the language of BE speakers was underdeveloped, unsystematic, and indicative of a cognitive deficiency. Advocates of the difference theory conducted workshops and published papers which espoused their views. As I have done in this paper, they argued against using certain standardized tests to evaluate the language of BE speakers.

One might ask at this point, why is the debate being reopened? Why is it necessary, more than a decade later, to restate the arguments against using particular standardized tests to assess the linguistic systems of BE speakers? The answer is that in spite of the workshops and in spite of enlightening descriptive

studies of BE, many inappropriate tests are still being utilized. Here I can cite an outstanding example, namely, the case in which the PPVT (which failed all of the proposed guidelines presented in this paper) was employed as part of a learning disabilities evaluation for one of the plaintiff children in the Ann Arbor case. Excerpts from the results of the evaluation that were reported in the second amended complaint by the counsel for the plaintiffs included the following:

> The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test measures the student's language receptive skills. . . . From the results obtained from this evaluation, her [the plaintiff] language receptive skills are at the lower limits of the average range of intelligence. Her mental age of 5.4 years in [sic] contrast to 3.8 years of age when she was evaluated . . . on 10/5/76. (Kaimowitz and Lewis, 1979:10)

According to the plaintiffs' attorneys, the Ann Arbor School District defendants "placed or threatened to place" the student referred to in the above quote in classes and programs for learning disabled children without regard to her linguistic background. Whether this student was ultimately placed in a class for the learning disabled was not reported, but the important point is that this case is not an isolated one. For example, Mercer and Brown (1973) found that invalid test results served as the basis for labelling about three times more Blacks and about four times more Mexican-Americans as mentally retarded than would be expected from their percentage in the general population.

It is obvious that the problems which are created by the use of invalid tests are indeed profound. It is hoped that the Ann Arbor decision, which has had the power to refocus attention on the testing issue, will also motivate investigators to conduct the basic language acquisition research on BE which is a necessity if valid language evaluations are to become a reality for speakers of this dialect.

FOOTNOTES

[1]This goal, particularly the subgoal of projecting dialect differences as normal, would ordinarily not be overtly stated as a requirement of a language evaluation; however, the longstanding practice of classifying dialect differences as language disorders makes the specification of such a goal necessary.

[2]The occurrence of disorders in linguistic systems is a universal. They have been observed across dialects (e.g. standard English, Black English, Appalachian English) and languages (e.g. French, Spanish).

[3]I make this recommendation because the results of an invalid evaluation could lead to inappropriate actions with regard to

special services and educational placement for a speaker. In the long run, it is better to put pressure on the administrative structure of an institution and force it to provide the tools (workshops for the demonstration of new procedures when necessary, as well as commercial tests) necessary for performing valid evaluations for BE speakers.

[4]Guideline 2 and the remaining guidelines are equally relevant for the evaluation of tools that will be used to assess the language of speakers acquiring SE or any other language variety. Because the forms of SE serve as the norm for most tools, no problems are encountered when the SE speaker's system is developing normally. However, when these speakers exhibit language disorders, the evaluator is confronted with the problem of finding a tool which can appropriately characterize the nature of the disorder. For example, the UTLD is incapable of adequately assessing a language disorder, and this is true irrespective of the dialect in which the disorder is observed. When the dialect happens to be BE, the problem is compounded.

[5]Children's drawings generally become more complex with age, but the relationship between the acquisition of drawing skills and the acquisition of linguistic knowledge must be determined before such an item can serve as a revealing assessment task.

[6]I realize that more specific and detailed evaluations could have been presented for each test, but such a task was not attempted since my intention was to provide a general set of guidelines which could serve as criteria for the first, but most important, phase of test evaluation. When the guidelines we have proposed cannot be met by a particular test, secondary problems like poor pictures, confusing scoring systems, and inadequate instructions need not be considered. The point is that once a potential user of a test realizes, for example, that the assumptions about language underlying a tool are invalid, then the questions regarding whether the pictures are of good quality or whether the scoring system is confusing become irrelevant.

[7]The CFUA does not include a procedure for evaluating the phonological component. A measure which should be considered for this purpose is the Fisher-Logemann Test of Articulation Competence (Fisher and Logemann, 1971). This tool has been adapted to assess the differences exhibited by several dialects, including BE.

APPENDIX

Utah Test of Language Development

The UTLD provides the clinician with an objective instrument for measurement of expressive and receptive verbal language skills in both normal and handicapped children (Mecham et al., 1967:1). According to the authors, the test utilizes the development approach for appraisal of language readiness.

The test consists of 51 items which are subdivided according to the expected age of acquisition. The items for each age level are listed below.

1-2 Year Level

The examiner determines whether the child can perform the following tasks:

1. Respond to name and no-no
2. Follow simple instructions
3. Mark with a pencil or crayon
4. Recognize names of common objects (e.g. ball, hammer, marble, pencil, gun, and cup)
5. Recognize parts of the body when named
6. Recognize parts of the body not named in Item 5
7. Identify common pictures when named (e.g. hammer, gun, ball, pencil, cup, and doll)
8. Use word combinations of two or more

2-3 Year Level

9. Name common pictures (e.g. wagon, cat, dog, shoes, car, book, boy, girl, house, and candy)
10. Name common pictures (child is expected to name more pictures than was named in Item 9 in order to receive a score)
11. Repeat two digits
12. Respond to simple commands
13. Identify action in pictures
14. Name one color
15. Point to pictures named (e.g. table, bird, ball, sitting, leaf, catching, hitting, fly, and peeking)

3-4 Year Level

16. Repeat three digits
17. Say full name

18. Name common pictures (e.g. wagon, cat, dog, shoes, car, book, boy, girl, house, light, candy, hand, and fence)
19. Recite at least one nursery rhyme
20. Copy a cross

4-5 Year Level

21. Name colors
22. Repeat four digits
23. Carry out three commands
24. Repeat a 12-syllable sentence
25. Draw with pencil or crayon

5-6 Year Level

26. Copy a square
27. Print simple words
28. Point to pictures depicting: freckle, argument, tumble, and signal

6-7 Year Level

29. Identify (by naming) penny, nickel, and dime
30. Write numbers to 30
31. Tell a familiar story
32. Read words on pre-primer level
33. Recite numbers from 1 to 50
34. Can copy a diamond

7-8 Year Level

35. Point to pictures depicting the following: tackling, refreshment, cheerful, loser, and liquid
36. Identify (by naming) quarter, half-dollar, and dollar
37. Repeat five digits
38. Name the days of the week

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

According to Dunn, the PPVT "was designed to provide an estimate of a subject's *verbal intelligence* through measuring his hearing vocabulary" (Dunn, 1965: 25). The test contains 150 plates, and each includes four pictorial representations of vocabulary items. For example, Plate 33 includes representations of a letter, a trunk, a pitcher, and a saw. The examiner says the name of one of the pictures, and the testee is instructed to identify the item by pointing or giving its corresponding number.

Bankson Language Screening Test

The BLST "was developed to provide a means by which a number of psycholinguistic as well as perceptual skills could be surveyed in children . . ." (Bankson, 1977:1). The author also notes that the test was designed to assess expressive language.

The test consists of 17 nine-item subtests organized into five general categories: semantic knowledge, morphological rules, syntactic rules, visual perception, and auditory perception. The subsections for each category are listed below. Examples of tasks will also be described.

I. Semantic Knowledge

A. Body Parts--the testee is asked to name nine body parts
B. Nouns--identify pictures of nouns
C. Verbs--name actions depicted pictorially
D. Categories--classify objects
E. Functions--indicate the function of a set of objects
F. Prepositions--identify the location of a set of objects
G. Colors/Quantity--identify six colors, indicate knowledge of the concepts more and most, and count to 15
H. Opposites--give the word which codes the opposite meaning of a set of concepts, e.g. big, easy, heavy

II. Morphological Rules

I. Pronouns--respond to items which are constructed to elicit the following: her, them, both of them, him, she, they, he, hers, theirs, his
J. Verb Tenses--respond to items which are constructed to elicit the present progressive marker, the third person singular marker, and past and future markers
K. Plurals, Comparatives, Superlatives--respond to items which elicit regular and irregular plural markers and comparative and superlative markers

III. Syntactic Rules

L. Subject-Verb Agreement/Negation--respond to items which elicit knowledge of rules which govern subject-verb agreement (e.g. He walks. They ____ (walk)), and knowledge of rules for coding negation (e.g. This cake was eaten, but this cake ____ (wasn't))
M. Sentence Repetition, Judgment of Correctness--testee is asked to repeat five sentences and indicate whether a set of four sentences is grammatically correct.

IV. Visual Perception

N. Visual Matching, Discrimination--after examining a set of five objects, the testee is required to identify the matching ones. The discrimination task requires the child to identify objects which should not be included in a particular category
O. Visual Association, Sequencing--child is required to categorize objects based on their functional similarity to other objects. The sequencing task involves examining a specific sequence of items, studying alternative sequencings of the same items, and finally selecting the original sequence presented

V. Auditory Perception

P. Auditory Memory--child is asked to repeat sets of single words and sentences presented by the examiner
Q. Auditory Sequencing, Discrimination--a series of events are related to the testee, who is instructed to retell the events in the same sequence in which they were presented. The auditory discrimination tasks involve distinguishing between words that are minimal pairs, e.g. the testee is shown pictures of a key, cup, and bee and instructed to point to the key

The Developmental Sentence Scoring Procedure

The Developmental Sentence Scoring technique provides a procedure for analyzing eight categories of grammatical forms. These include indefinite pronouns, personal pronouns, main verbs, secondary verbs, negative forms, conjunctions, interrogative reversal question types, and wh-questions. Data for the analysis consist of a set (50 or more) of complete sentences (must contain a subject and a verb) which are extracted from a spontaneous speech sample. Detailed instructions regarding the scoring of the sentences are provided by Lee (1974:132-163).

Houston Test of Language Development

The HTLD is composed of two parts. Part I claims to assess language development from the age of 6 months to 36 months, while Part II purports to assess language development in children between the ages of 3 and 6 years. According to Crabtree, the test "was designed for the purpose of establishing a basis for the objective evaluation of language functioning in children" (1963:1). In reference to Part II, Crabtree states that its purpose is to "provide a language scale for the age levels of three through six," and points out that such a "scale could be used to

assist in the diagnosis of language disorders" (Crabtree, 1963:2).

The 18 sections which comprise Part II are described in the following paragraphs. Examples of tasks are included in the description.

I. Self identity. The tasks include answering the questions "What is your full name?" and "How old are you?"

II. Vocabulary. The testee is asked to identify verbally 20 pictures representing objects, nine pictures representing actions, six pictures representing colors, and three pictures which depict emotional states (e.g. happy, sad).

III. Body parts. Tasks included in this section are presented in two parts. In Part A, the child is instructed to identify the following body parts: chin, elbow, knee, and ankle. In Part B, the child is instructed to answer questions about the functions of the body, e.g. "What do you see with?" and "What do you hear with?"

IV. Gesture. This section contains nine tasks. The child is asked to clap his hands; to close his eyes; to show his teeth; to pretend that he is combing his hair, batting a ball, and eating an ice cream cone; to make a square (by placing his thumbs end to end and extending forefingers at a right angle) and a circle (with the index finger and the thumb); to illustrate smallness with his hands (the exact instructions are "Now with your hands, you show me something little"); to illustrate tallness with his hands (the instructions are "Now with your hand, show me something tall") (Crabtree, 1963:16).

V. Auditory judgment. The child is asked to answer the following questions: "Which is bigger, a mother or a baby?" "Which is faster, an airplane or a truck?" "Which is older, a man or a boy?"

VI. Communicative behavior. The following materials are shown to the examinee: a miniature doll family, a bathtub, a dining room set, a truck, and several toy animals. The testee is then instructed to play with them for a little while. After five to ten minutes, the child is asked to tell a story about the toys. The test constructor notes that "the examiner should try to get at least ten sentences or thought units which are not elicited by a direct question" (Crabtree, 1963:18). The following description of the expected response from the three-year-old provides an example of how the "sentences" will be analyzed. "The three-year-old starts talking immediately upon the presentation of the objects. He does not attempt to communicate with the examiner, but appears absorbed in talking to himself. 'What's that? A bathtub, that's what it is.' He will not respond verbally upon demand" (Crabtree, 1963:19).

VII. Temporal content. This section involves further analyzing the data recorded in Section VI. The goal is to determine the child's ability to code time concepts linguistically. Examples of the specific instructions for analyzing and scoring a child's utterances are presented here.

> The three-year-old does not express time, so does not score on this item.
>
> The four-year-old expresses his thoughts in the immediate present time. He does not use the auxiliary verb. The past is expressed in the present. Examples: "Baby playing in the bathtub." "The horsie fall down" (Crabtree, 1963:20).

VIII. Syntactic complexity. Like Section VII, this section involves analyzing the constructions recorded in Section VI. The implied goal is to determine the syntactic complexity of a child's responses. A description of the expected responses for a three-year-old reflects the general analytical framework.

> The three-year-old may use phrases, or short fragmentary sentences. In other words, the subject and/or the predicate are missing. For example, "a little chair," "there a chair," "Hey, a boy!" "Take shoes off" (Crabtree, 1963:21).

IX. Sentence length. The goal of this section is to compute "the average number of words used in each sentence or thought unit" recorded for Section VI. Five criteria for averaging were presented. Included in the fourth criterion was the following instruction: ". . . the sentence, 'once upon a time a father rode in a truck,' would be counted as having six words" (Crabtree, 1963:23). No credit is given for "once upon a time."

X. Prepositions. The child's knowledge of specific spatial relationships is determined by requiring him to place a toy in, under, behind, and in front of a chair.

XI. Serial counting. The examinee is required to count, in serial order, to the highest number possible.

XII. Counting objects. The task in this section involves counting cards that are presented to the examinee. The number of cards presented must exceed the highest number counted in the preceding serial counting task, e.g. if a child counted to five, 10 cards should be placed before him. When the examinee has finished counting, the examiner asks, "How many cards are there?"

XIII. Repetition of speech patterns. The child is asked to repeat the following constructions: animal; I went to town; Mary goes to school on the bus; When school is out, I will go to the store to buy some candy.

XIV. Repetition of melody patterns. The child is asked to perform three tasks. The first involves repeating the examiner's production of bong, bong, bong. According to the manual, when presenting these words, the tester should let his "voice rise a pitch up the scale with each word" (Crabtree, 1963:26). The child is expected to copy the tone of the examiner. In the second task the child is asked to produce bo, bo, bo three

times. Each production should contain the prescribed stress pattern illustrated by the examiner. For example, during the first production, the initial bo of the bo, bo, bo pattern should be stressed, and during the second, the second bo, etc. In the third task the child is required to whisper bong, bong.

XV. Geometric designs. The examinee is asked to draw a circle, a cross, a square, a triangle, and a diamond. Illustrations are provided by the examiner.

XVI. Drawing. The child is instructed to draw a house, a tree, and a person. All verbalizations produced during this task are recorded.

XVII. Verbalizations while drawing. The responses recorded during the drawing task are analyzed and scored. The following examples of scoring criteria reveal the analytical framework.

The three-year-old does not score.
The four-year-old talks while drawing.
The six-year-old inhibits speech until he is called upon to tell about his drawing (Crabtree, 1963:30).

XVIII. Tells about drawing. Responses recorded during the drawing task (Section XVI) are further evaluated in this section. Upon finishing his drawing, the child is instructed to tell the examiner about his picture. Here are examples of the guidelines for the analysis of the four- and five-year-olds' responses.

The four-year-old names the objects in the picture.
The five-year-old names and in addition, uses descriptive words, such as "a big house," or "a blue dress" (Crabtree, 1963:30).

Lawyers, Linguists, and Language Arts: From the School Administrator's Viewpoint

Thomas P. Pietras

> Counsel for defendant is directed to submit to this court within thirty (30) days a proposed plan *defining the exact steps to be taken* (1) to help the teachers of the plaintiff children at King School to identify children speaking "black English" and the language spoken as a home or community language, and (2) to use that knowledge in teaching such students how to read standard English.

Thus, Judge Charles Joiner on July 12, 1979, ordered the Ann Arbor School Board to take steps to instruct certain of its teachers about the relation of Vernacular Black English (VBE) to learning to read standard English (SE). This order is consonant with and a further extension of a current societal demand for accountability in public education. There seems to be a general feeling and impression that students are not learning and it is the teachers who must be at fault.

What seems unusual about this "teacher fault finding" is that members of the educational profession seem quick and sometimes eager to help the general public form negative opinions about the quality of public school teachers. For example, Burling (1973) states:

> Surely the major problem is that the children learn very early that they cannot meet the teacher's expectations. They learn that there is something about their language that many people dislike. When they try to speak, they cannot help using nonstandard grammar and nonstandard sounds, and bitter experience teaches them to expect few rewards for that. They are corrected, misunderstood, and made to feel stupid. If they cannot speak in ways that please their teachers, their final, desperate, and tragic

> defense is to keep quiet. A "nonverbal" child is born.

This kind of statement is representative of many made by respected members of the academic community. So why shouldn't the public believe that teachers are suspect in their ability to teach? Why shouldn't the public seek redress through the courts? In fact, when the media-labeled *Ann Arbor Black English Case* went to trial, there was no problem in obtaining expert witnesses for the plaintiffs from among the sociolinguistic community. The academic non-debate in court reflected, to those not conversant with research data regarding VBE and learning to read, an unequivocal position which implied that:

(1) teachers must know the history of VBE from a sociolinguistic perspective;
(2) teachers must know the phonology, syntax, and lexicon of VBE;
(3) teachers must know how to identify speakers of VBE;
(4) teachers not knowing (1), (2), and (3) above cannot teach students who speak VBE how to read SE; and
(5) teachers knowing (1), (2), and (3) above will be able to teach students who speak VBE how to read SE English.

No one can deny that it is eminently reasonable to provide reading teachers with knowledge about language and its use by and impact on students, as well as its role as a medium of teaching and learning between teacher and students. What is at issue and under study by researchers is the import of such knowledge relative to teaching reading. The following are representative statements from the sociolinguistic community of researchers and writers regarding this import:

> There is more evidence for dialect influence then there is for interference. . . . research shows that pronunciation differences actually result in little or no interference in reading text materials in context.
> . . . reading must be valued within a culture-specific setting before widescale success can ever be expected.
> . . . materials are not the sole contributing factor to reading problems and reading failure for different dialect speakers and cultural groups. (Wolfram et al., 1979)

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> In this paper, we have described a group of studies on dialect variation. These studies represent attempts to locate the sources of difficulties for dialect speakers on three different levels: (1) phonological, (2) grammatical,

and (3) lexical and content. Their findings, taken as a whole, do not adequately identify the sources of difficulties; they are both inconclusive and conflicting. They contain a number of methodological flaws which cast doubt on their validity. More importantly, it is quite likely that the theoretical hypotheses which underlie these studies are in need of revision. (Hall and Guthrie, 1979)

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Related to nonstandard English speakers, research evidence indicates that such speakers have an ability to deal with SE as a receptive process. Reading Miscue Research Projects by Goodman suggest that when readers read orally in their own dialect, they still understand the meaning of the message intended in SE. (Goodman and Sims, 1974)

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It is very clear, for example, that copula deletion is a characteristic of Vernacular Black English as it is spoken in New York, Washington, D.C., and Detroit. Certain linguists violently object to this idea, noting that Southern Whites also say "he here" or "you gonna do it." And, of course, they are quite correct. What they fail to see, however, is that those who posit copula deletion a characteristic of Vernacular Black English are not comparing Southern Whites to Northern Blacks but are, quite the contrary, concerned about what is considered Vernacular Black English in those specific Northern contexts. But even there, we find that speakers of the dialect do not delete every copula. In fact, the frequency of occurrence of that deletion stratifies quite nicely according to socio-economic status. Likewise, not every standard English speaker produces a copula every time it might be expected in his speech, although the frequency of occurrence is probably very high. An even clearer case is that of multiple negation which is also said to characterize Vernacular Black English, even though it is quite clear that many Whites also use the form regularly. What, then, can it mean to call it Vernacular Black English? Simply that it is consistently found to occur in the continuous, natural speech of Blacks at a much higher frequency than it occurs in the speech of Whites from the same communities and of the same socio-economic status. Strangely enough, this sort of finding is still rather new in linguistics and, to some linguists, quite heretical. (Shuy, 1976)

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> The effect a person's dialect has on those around him appears to be particularly significant in the area of classroom interaction; how might teachers make educational judgments about students on the basis of language. This could be significant if the child's language varies considerably from that of the teacher, as is often the case with minority or low socioeconomic students. In these instances, judgments may be based on language, ethnicity or the interaction of both rather than actual academic performance and achievement. (Pietras, 1979)

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> Diversity of speech communities involves social as well as linguistic realities; we must face the fact that there are different vantage points from which diversity may be viewed.
>
> One person's obstacle may be someone else's source of identity . . . repertoire comprises a set of ways of speaking. Ways of speaking, in turn, comprise speech styles, on the one hand, and contexts of discourse, on the other, together with the relations of appropriateness obtaining between styles and contexts. Membership in a speech community consists in sharing one or more of its ways of speaking--that is, not in knowledge of a speech style . . . alone, but in terms of knowledge of appropriate use as well. There are rules of use without which rules of syntax are useless. (Hymes, 1973)

Thus, truth seems to lie in many directions, and no one direction offers, as yet, the herald cry of definitive truth. There is no doubt that the research, theory, and opinion on how teachers can apply knowledge of VBE to reading instruction are significant and valuable for them, but the pedagogical applications of the linguistic knowledge regarding this issue are certainly problematical.

A review of some of the pedagogical applications that have been recommended over the past decade follows. However, one should note that these examples reflect varying points of view among sociolinguists and practitioners, i.e. there seems to be no consensus favoring any one or combination of these.

(1) Train teachers to become, in effect, linguists.

(2) Train teachers to use an oral/aural approach with VBE speakers to help them learn to code switch to SE, i.e. use a foreign language teaching approach.

(3) Use VBE dialect readers with students who speak this dialect to teach them to read SE.

(4) In beginning reading instruction, focus on phonological differences between VBE and SE, such as medial /th/ rendered as /v/ or final consonant cluster reduction /st/, /sp/, /sk/ rendered as /s/, i.e. teach auditory discrimination.

(5) Do not attempt to teach oral SE to VBE speakers as time, maturity, and circumstance will resolve this issue for speakers of this dialect.
(6) Teach reading as comprehension and disregard the language variety a VBE speaker may use in expressing reading comprehension.
(7) Train teachers to develop positive attitudes toward VBE generally and VBE speakers specifically.
(8) Train teachers in the features of VBE so they can take these into account as they teach reading to VBE speakers.

All of these recommendations have, in some way, proven their value to some researcher or practitioner, and there is no reason to gainsay the claims of a respected researcher or practitioner regarding their reported success with a particular pedagogical approach. What is at issue, however, for a school district under the scrutiny of a court order is the need for a program to teach VBE speaking students to read--a program which should not be speculative or experimental. The reason for this is that the court order carries with it the expectation of success. Since the court order, the administrators of the Ann Arbor public schools have found that:

(1) there are no common practices adopted by other school districts from which they could learn;
(2) there are no commercial materials that are generally accepted by the profession; and
(3) there are no programs that have been released, after careful research and evaluation, by the federal government's educational research and development (R&D) centers.

They have also found that:

(4) there is a wealth of materials that focus on explaining language variation generally and VBE specifically;
(5) this material is directed at teachers; and
(6) the thrust of these materials *assumes* that teacher knowledge about VBE will result in success in language arts for VBE speaking students.

Although the latter three findings demonstrate a positive direction in contributing to progress in teaching language arts, they are only a partial answer to a complex problem. To complete the answer, researchers and practitioners need to address the difficulties posed by (1)-(3) above.
In the meantime, Ann Arbor teachers and administrators often feel as though they are adrift in a sociolinguistic sea, much akin to the plight of the ancient Mariner who uttered:

Water, water, everywhere and
all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

We all know the Mariner made it to shore; only time will tell how and when we will make it to shore on this issue.

Black English: Implications of the Ann Arbor Decision for the Classroom

Elizabeth M. Whatley

INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss some of the implications of the Ann Arbor decision for the individual classroom. Specifically, I will focus on the implications of actually taking the language of the students into account in teaching reading. The first part of this paper will discuss skill development programs and the ways in which they can conflict with the language structure and use of Black dialect speaking children. The second section will discuss language interaction patterns of the Black speech community and how they may conflict with classroom interaction patterns.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

American schools are replete with diverse reading programs and curricula. Typical curricula include basal reading programs, programmed reading instructions, individualized prescribed instructions, linguistically oriented approaches, and the language experience approach. Inherent in these varied programs and approaches is the notion of reading skill development--the progressive/sequential teaching and learning of knowledge, concepts, and principles which facilitate the decoding process, vocabulary development, and comprehension of written materials. Among their word recognition components, skill development programs include the teaching and learning of phonics and word structure decoding skills.

Phonics skill components introduce, at the initial stage of reading acquisition, the relationship between the sounds of the English language and their written representations. Basic phoneme-grapheme relations of consonants, consonant clusters, consonant digraphs, vowels, vowel digraphs, and diphthongs are aspects of such programs. Word structure skills focus on the ways miminal units (i.e. phonemes, bound morphemes, and

graphemes) are grouped to form written representations of spoken words. Among the skills taught are affixes, root words, tense, syllabication, and stress.

Each program offers unique features which distinguishes it from every other program, yet their goals are similar. Further, schools and classrooms within the same school differ in organizational structure, individual teacher strategies, needs, preferences, and other factors which influence and determine program selection and operation. Skill lessons vary from 5 to 10 minutes in a single day to a series of lessons over many days. However, the day to day operation of typical skills programs have common instructional and organizational elements: suggested instructional strategies for introducing and maintaining skills and concepts are learning strategies for practicing, reinforcing, and applying skills.

Instructional-Learning Strategies and Structural Aspects of Black Dialect

Reading programs provide for teachers strategies which are appropriate for teaching each skill area--strategies which are presumably appropriate for standard English (SE) speaking children. Few programs provide alternative strategies for teaching non-mainstream children with diverse language systems and sociocultural backgrounds. Consequently, strategies appropriate for one group of children may be inappropriately used with other children. It therefore becomes necessary to determine those strategies which are appropriate and those which are not. To accomplish this task, two identifications must be made: (1) skills and related strategies which have the potential of conflicting with the learner's language and (2) the instructional level at which such conflicts occur during daily classroom activities.

Linguistic research which describes the phonological and syntactic rules of the learner's language can be used to initially identify possible conflicts and non-conflicts between reading skills and the learner's language (see Fig. 1). The comparative summary shows many possible grapheme-phoneme relations which may conflict with the phonological and syntactic rules of Black dialect. The structure of teaching-learning strategies provides teachers with a suitable framework for identifying the occurrence of dialect in day to day classroom activities. Generally, typical programs have four parts: (1) introduction of skill and related concepts and principles, (2) practice and reinforcement exercises, (3) skill application, and (4) evaluation of skill attainment.

To illustrate this, let us consider the case of consonant digraph th, which is used to identify language related conflicts. One of the principles of teaching phonics is the use of concrete key vocabulary words to introduce new skills. A cursory

FIGURE I

No Conflict	*Possible Conflict*	*Occurrence*
PHONIC SKILLS		
Single Consonants	–	–
Irregular Forms: c, g, lamb, knife, etc.	–	–
Consonant Clusters		
Initial Clusters + l and r: bl, br-pl, pr, sl-st, sw	str-	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading
Final Clusters	-sk, sp, st	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading
Consonant Digraphs: sh, ch, -ng	th- initial, medial, and final sounds	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading
Vowels:		
Long Vowels—selective initial position, medial position, final position	Stress rules may produce omission of initial vowel syllable (selective), e.g. ə'leven-'leven	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading; written exercises
Short Vowels—initial position, medial position, final position	Stress rules may produce omission of initial vowel syllable (selective), e.g. especially-'specially	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading; written exercises
Digraphs	–	–
Diphthongs	–	–
Modified by r, m(n), and l	Short vowels i + g followed by n do contrast, e.g. pin = pen	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading
Schwa	Stress rules may produce omission of initial sound, e.g. about-'bout	Instructional; oral responses; oral reading; written exercises
Patterned Principles		
Vowel Principles:	–	–
VC, CVC, CVCC, etc.	–	–
Rhyming Words: sound-sound patterns make-steak	visual-sound patterns man-hand	Instructional; oral responses; written exercises
WORD STRUCTURE SKILLS		
Affixes		
Prefixes: un, sub, pre, com, etc.	–	–
Suffixes: able, al, full hood, less, etc.	–	–
(a) Comparatives: er, est	–	–
(b) n/en: taken, given, etc.	–	–
(c) y to i: happy-happiest	–	–
(d) f to v: half-halve	–	–
(e) Possessive Forms: John's		Instructional; oral responses; oral reading; written exercises
(f) Plural Forms: boxes	(f) Plural Forms: cups	
	(g) Past Tense Forms: walked, laughed	
	(h) Verb Forms: walks, likes, etc.	
(i) Gender: host, hostess	–	–
Root Words	–	–
Contractive Forms	–	–
Compound Words	–	–
Syllabication Rules	–	–
Compounds	–	–
Double Consonants	–	–
Polysyllabic Words (VCCV-circumference, secret)	–	–
Consonant Blends	–	–
Double Vowels: lions, giant, poetry	–	–
Stress (Accent) Rules		
Two-syllable words: rescue	–	–
Multisyllable Words with Affixes: surrounding, prevention	–	–
Words Which Function as nouns or verbs: record-record	–	–
Unstressed Syllables with Vowel Sounds: upper, atom	Unstressed Syllables with Schwa Sounds: (re)member, (a)rithmetic, (be)cause	Oral responses; written exercises

examination of phonic materials shows the use of such key words as thimble, thermometer, thumb, and thorn with pictures; rarely are the, this, that, and other words beginning with th- used to introduce grapheme-phoneme relations. Phonic instructional strategies require teachers to teach the meaning of the digraph (or review its meaning when sh, ch, and -ng are prerequisite skills), present key words emphasizing initial sound, and note its written representation. Accompanying strategies include the use of pictures, picture cards, chalkboard, and chart examples of th- grapheme-phoneme concepts. At this introductory stage children are required to engage in different types of learning strategies: listening, verbally responding, or manipulating materials.

The major task of teachers at this point is (1) to determine whether or not conflicts exist between key words and children's pronunciations and (2) to determine whether or not such conflicts are caused by differences in language use or lack of grapheme-phoneme knowledge. Children's verbal, written, and manipulative responses are the basis for this determination. For example, given the research on the phonology of Black dialect, one would expect a mismatch between a Black English speaker's pronunciation of key words beginning with voiced th- (e.g. the, this, these, and those may be pronounced as duh, dis, dese, and dose) and the standard English pronunciations. On the other hand, the research shows that words beginning with voiceless th- (e.g. thimble, thermometer, and thumb) are not realized as phonological mismatches during the reading process. Since the latter set of words begin with the voiceless variant of th- as opposed to the voiced one, they are exempted from the Black dialect rule which allows a speaker to substitute a d for the th as in this. The reading teacher should be aware of this basic difference between the set of th- key words before they are introduced to students in the classroom.

At the introductory stage identifying problem areas should be based as much on the discipline of reading as it is on knowledge of language diversity. Children who have progressed to the learning of consonant digraphs tend to perform in concert with prior skill development. That is, movement from low levels to more advanced levels is dependent upon many prior skill achievements, e.g. matching other consonant digraphs, consonant clusters, single consonants, and vowels. There is little to suggest that children who demonstrate knowledge of related phonic skills discard such knowledge when introduced to th- grapheme-phoneme principles. Classroom teachers who are aware of their children's prior skill achievement and the program's skill sequence have few problems determining when dialect and instructional strategy conflict at the introductory stage.

This knowledge also aids teachers in identifying problems at each subsequent stage. At the second stage, practice and

reinforcement exercises provide teachers with tangible evidence of children's grapheme-phoneme concepts. Less concrete words are used at this level; among them are thirsty, thirteen, thirty, three, throat, thread, other, mother, brother, tooth, bath, breath, teeth, wreath, earth, and path. Many are written exercises (simple circling, drawing lines, and using words in sentences), and these are more important for evaluation than the oral responses given by children at the introductory stage. They represent th- concept attainment rather than imitative or echoic responses often given by children in teacher-pupil interactions. Linguistic analysis and reading knowledge are the basic ingredients for distinguishing dialect interferences from skill deficiencies.

At the third stage of skill development application of th- grapheme-phoneme principles, the most significant th- vocabulary words are used. Among the most frequently used vocabulary items found in reading programs are the, this, that, them, these, those, they, there, their, than, then, through, three, thought, though, thing, with, and something. In most programs these words are scattered throughout skill development components. Nevertheless, most (if not all) have been identified and isolated by teachers as the most frequently misread th- vocabulary words. Further, teachers indicate that they occur at the grapheme-phoneme level of word recognition, i.e. children read th- words as duh, dis, dat, dem, and so on.

Teachers who evaluate children's reading abilities at this conceptual level have failed to take into consideration several factors. First, th- grapheme-phoneme knowledge is implicitly assumed at the third instructional stage, since previously discussed skill development programs require prerequisite phonic understandings prior to advancement. Second, while th- concepts are the underlying basis for word recognition, spellings, usage, and meaning differentiation are the main functions of instruction at this stage. For example, they are taught as pronouns (this, that, them, they, these, those); as homonyms (their, there, they're; through, threw); as sight words (the, though, thought); and as usage items (than, then). And third, the most striking characteristics of the words are (1) their visual similarities and (2) their power of semantic substitution. Visual similarities are found in this, these, and those; their and there; through and though; than, then, and them. In addition, many share similar functions and meanings. For example, in the sentence See the shoes?, these or those may be substituted for the without a change in meaning, and in See the shoe?, this or that may be substituted. Failure by teachers to consider these and other factors when identifying reading problems often results in inaccurate identification of reading skill development and processes.

At the skill application stage, it is crucial for teachers to identify children's reading problems with specificity and

sophistication. Identification can be based on linguistic descriptions, but these cannot be solely relied upon. Anticipating the oral reading responses of children which reflect their language is an appropriate, initial instructional strategy. Children unable to decode the written symbols the, that, and this as duh dat, and dis are ill-prepared to deal effectively with homonyms, pronouns, shades of meanings, and higher level reading skills. More important, however, is teachers' realization that children are required to apply their learnings on more than one level. Children's written and manipulative responses are more indicative of their skill acquisition than their phonological renditions of particular vocabulary words.

Combined knowledge of dialect characteristics and skill development programs provides a framework for identifying and eliminating areas of conflicts. Identifying dialect variables for key words and words used frequently in reading eliminates, for example, potential conflicts with the consonant cluster str-. The linguistic data indicate that str- may be skr- in Black children's dialect; thus street and stream are sometimes pronounced and subsequently orally read as skreet and skream. On the other hand, str- has a low frequency of occurrence in phonic related materials.

Similarly, final consonant clusters -sp, -sk, -st, and others shown in the linguistic description of Black dialect can be correlated with the sequence of skills development programs. Additionally, children's hypercorrective responses (desses for desks) and words unaffected by dialect (-ed as a past tense marker in wanted or skated) give further evidence of children's recognition of printed symbols or decoding skills.

Operating within existing skills development curricula appears to be a tedious and time-consuming task for already overtaxed teachers. Yet, if serious consideration is to be given to dialect variation, this is a necessary prerequisite for effective teaching of Black dialect speaking children.

Instructional-Learning Strategies and Language Use

The language of Black dialect speaking children involves more than phonology and syntax. Consideration must also be given to the ways members of the speech community use language in day to day interactions. However, with the exception of research conducted on the various expressive forms of Black males (sounding, shucking and jiving, playing the dozens, etc.), little is known about children's discourse styles and properties, speech events, or child-child and adult-child interactions. Further, there is little reported information on the ways children are taught the rules for language use and how such rules are manifested in their day to day communications with each other and with adult members of the speech community. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made here to

incorporate, in a very general way, the relationship between children's language use and the instructional strategies used in the teaching of reading.

Rhyming Word Patterns. Skills programs offer two basic approaches for teaching rhyming words: (1) the Family Method and (2) the Rules Method. The family method focuses on constancy of final phonograms (or sounds) while emphasizing substitution of initial consonants (e.g. the at family: bat, cat, fat, etc.). The rules method focuses on patterns of word formations emphasizing the teaching and learning of rules governing word structures (e.g. CVC, CVCC, etc.). Both methods emphasize matching pairs of words that look and sound alike, or visual-sound patterns (man-can; cake-make).

Children of the Black speech community engage in many activities which involve rhyming word concepts. Throughout the elementary school years, they participate in "sounding," "playing the dozens," jump rope, handclapping games, and other play activities composed of rhyming words. Many of these language related activities are composed of two different types of patterns: sound-sound patterns and visual-sound patterns. A typical handclapping game containing these two patterns is illustrated below.

Ol' Lady Dinah, sick in bed
Sent for the doctor, doctor said
Get up Dinah, you ain't sick
All you need is a licking stick

Similar patterns are found in the following pairs extracted from jump rope games.

Banana, banana, play piano (schwa /ə/ sound)

I saw you with your boyfriend last night
What's his name Sammy White

. . . A boy kiss a girl
take a trip around the worl(d)

Wrap it up in toilet paper
Throw it down the elevator

Salute to the captain, bow to the queen
Turn around like a submarine

Hey consolation where have you been
Round the corner and back again

Additional pairs which follow sound-sound patterns are baby-gravy; curl-pearl; curl-twirl; kiss-twis(t); blue-do; do-two; duty-beauty; end-ten; and fence-cent(s).

Visual-sound patterns (or words that look and sound alike) are also used to construct rhymes.

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
All around the nimber-rick

Wash the dirty dishes, lazy
Jump out the window, crazy

Fudge, fudge, call the judge

Pepsi-cola went to town
Coca-cola shot him down

The basic tenet of this kind of rhyming word construction is that the words sound alike. This principle is implicitly obeyed in the making of rhymes in the Black speech community. Children's (and adult's) language related games are based solely on aural-oral strategies; visual-sound criteria are never of primary importance. By contrast, two tenets underlie rhyme construction in classrooms. Rhyming patterns must not only sound alike, they must also look alike, i.e. follow visual-sound rules. Sound-sound rules and visual-sound rules can either conflict with or complement one another in daily reading activities; the latter appears to be the most appropriate alternative.

Instructional strategies which consider sound-sound patterns as valid as visual-sound patterns will increase children's confidence in teacher-school related knowledges, as well as maintain confidence in their home-community based learnings. Also, teachers' recognition and acceptance of both patterns aid in the presentation of hierarchically structured rhyming principles (Fig. 2) and of regular and irregular vowel forms and related skill knowledge (Fig. 3).

Figure 2 shows a rhyming structure which takes into account children's extended oral responses to the basic -ar pattern. Children were asked to give words with the -ar sound as in bar, car, etc. Responses were recorded as outgrowths of the basic pattern regardless of endings, syllables, or structure. The only criteria held constant was the -ar sound. The teacher's recognition that starchy shared commonalities with the monosyllable words bar and car was the basis for accepting diverse responses from the children. In turn, the children gained insight into word structure and its relationship to words in the speaking vocabulary.

Figure 3 shows words from children's rhyming games. The Visual-Sound--Sound-Sound category illustrates the kinds of skills which can be taught. In addition to rhyming word concepts, words that violate the definition of vowel digraph (steak, break; lead, dead) can be taught as irregular spelling patterns. Vowel representations (some, come; rough, tough) which conflict with other grapheme-phoneme instructions can be used to teach chameleon-like vowel combinations (ou-out; ou-cough; ou-touch), and special consonant categories (-gh, ph-). The interrelatedness of reading skills becomes more coherent to

Figure 2
Building Rhyming Word Patterns

		barb, bark, barn, barge, barbecue, barks, barking, barked
		bars
barkeeper	bar	barred-barring
	car	
	(d)	
	far	
	(g)	
	(h)	
	jar	
	(k)	
	(l)	
	mar	
	(n)	
	par	
	(r)	
	(s)	
	tar	tardy, target, tartar-sauce, star-stark-start-startle, startling starch-starched-starches, starchy
stardust		
starfish		
starflower		
starlet		
starlight		
star-crossed		

Figure 3
Related Rhyming Word Skills

Visual-Sound/Sound-Sound Patterns		
make, take	*take, steak, break*	Irregular spelling pattern
come, some	*some, dumb*	Vowels modified by "m"
rough, tough	*tough, stuff*	Irregular vowel represental
lead, dead	*dead, said*	Irregular vowel represental
low, blow	*blow, dough*	Irregular vowel represental
Tony, pony	*pony, macaroni*	Polysyllabic word with like end sounds
sick, pick	*pick, arithmetic*	Polysyllabic word with like end sounds
cover, lover	*lover, mother*	Polysyllabic word with like end sounds

children when instructional strategies integrate their home-community based learnings with classroom-reading learnings. Teachers' acceptance of sound-sound rhyming word patterns is one step in the collaborative process of teaching reading to dialect speaking children.

The Language Experience Approach (LEA). Integrating children's language use into reading classroom practices is immediately accomplished when the language experience approach is used. Traditionally used as a supplement to other programs, it offers the widest and most flexible alternative for children whose language use differs significantly from the language used in basals and other reading programs. There are basically three instructional strategies available for teachers: (1) the pure strategy, (2) the modified strategy, and (3) the teacher-controlled strategy. The "pure strategy" permits children to relate real and vicarious experiences, create stories, or just to talk as teachers record (in the traditional orthography) precisely what is said. The only grammatical criteria implicitly imposed on children is that their "stories" must obey the syntactic rules of their own language.

The "modified strategy" allows children to use only limited non-textbook language. Loosely structured sentences are written by teachers as long as they are not significantly different from their standard English equivalent or are totally Black dialect. A multiple negation structure, for example, would be unacceptable and "modified" to fit standard English criteria for constructing negative sentences. Implicit in this strategy is the recognition of Black dialect forms, but other and "better" ways of using language and constructing sentences is thought more acceptable ("Can you say that in another way?").

The "controlled strategy" is completely dominated by teachers' notions of language use, standard English grammatical forms, and topical content. Children's responses are recorded only if they fit into teachers' preconceived notions of "appropriate" expressive forms ("I was very frightened" for "I was scared to death"), "correct" grammar ("I have never seen anything so large" for "I ain't never seen nothing that big"), and "appropriate" content ("Our Trip to the Zoo" while ignoring "How to Play Jump Rope").

Selecting the most appropriate strategy is not an easy task. Many factors must be considered prior to commiting oneself to any of the strategies, among them being: (1) Type of LEA, (2) Language Codes, (3) Classroom Organization, and (4) Classroom Racial Composition.

There are essentially two types of LEAs: individualized and group-oriented. In one-to-one teaching-learning situations, selecting the most appropriate strategy depends on one factor --the child's dominant dialect. Not all Black children are monodialectal; some are bidialectal and show high levels of standard English proficiency. However, when equal levels

of proficiency are not evident and Black dialect appears to be the dominant language used by the child, the pure instructional strategy is the most appropriate. A child should not be required to use unfamiliar language structures during reading activities; such requirements are more correctly expected during standard English learning activities.

In group-oriented Language Experiences, selection depends on the language characteristics of children within the group and the language-acceptance climate of the classroom. The selection criteria is once again based on dialect dominance among a group of bidialectal children and the absence of bidialectal proficiency among monodialectal children. With monodialectal children, the pure responses will reflect similar ways of using language and similar grammatical structures.

Two elicitation procedures characterize group-oriented LEAs. One elicits "We" type responses ("We went to the Museum of Natural Science") and general type responses ("The bus was waiting outside of the school at nine o'clock"). An alternate procedure elicits responses from each member of the group. They are recorded and individually designated as Johnny said "I like the dinosaurs best" or Johnny said "he liked the dinosaurs best." Either procedure may elicit "mixed-dialect" responses. That is, the final product may contain characteristics of Black dialect and of standard English.

Given this circumstance, the modified or controlled strategies, with elicitation prompts, appear to be the appropriate strategies. Each will insure consistency in language use and grammar. However, both strategies place a higher value on the written product than on the processes involved in acquiring the written representation. Furthermore, modifying or controlling children's responses violates the intent and philosophy of the LEA. The LEA is designed to show children the relationship between their spoken language (and experiences) and their written representations. It is not designed to teach "better" ways of speaking or notions of "correct" ways of speaking.

This is not to suggest that the LEA cannot be used to teach standard English to Black dialect speaking children; it can be used quite effectively for this purpose. A coherent, organized, and well-structured LEA used to teach the "communication arts" requires systematic instructional strategies designed to teach spoken standard English (grammar, phonology, uses, styles, rhythm, stress, etc.) and written standard English (grammar, usage, spelling, style, punctuation, etc.). Learning the communication arts is a complex process of interrelated skill development. It takes time for children to acquire proficiency in each of its aspects; moreover, no group of children except non-mainstream children is expected or required to learn every facet simultaneously with learning to

read. Incidental teaching of other communicative arts distracts from the important teaching embodied in the approach.

Modified and controlled instructional strategies (with "we" or general prompts) can be used effectively when the objectives of the LEA are brought to the forefront. They are designed to capture children's understanding of their world, to show them how this understanding can be symbolized in writing, and finally to show them that these symbols can be read.

In group-oriented Language Experiences (or individualized Language Experiences) teachers' modification and controlled strategies should be structured and organized to increase children's use of known vocabulary items and concepts. The following illustrates this point.

Child 1: *It was real big.*
Teacher: *How big; as big as what?*
Child 1: *As big as that desk over there.*
Teacher: *What desk; over there where?*
Child 1: *Sitting in the corner.*
Teacher: *So,* (Reads what has been written) *"It was as big as that desk over there, sitting in the corner." Who can tell me something else about it?*
Child 2: *It made a lot of noise.*
Teacher: *What kind of noise? What did it sound like?*
Child 2: *It sounded like* (noise)
Teacher: *I don't know if I can write that. Let's see* (Writes yee-ow-o) *OK,* (Reads) *"It made a lot of noise that sounded like yee-ow-o." Right?*
Child 2: *Yep. Yee-ow-o!*

Instructional strategies should also be geared to expand children's use of known grammatical forms:

Child: *I didn't have no good time.*
Teacher: *Why not?*
Child: *'Cause I lost my spending money.*
Teacher: (Reads) *I didn't have no good time because I lost my spending money.*

These samples illustrate modification and control strategies which do not violate the underlying premise of the LEA. They avoid vague notions of "complete sentences" and "proper English" and emphasize the relationship between oral language and written language. In many instances products of group-oriented language experiences will contain Black dialect as well as standard dialect. However, consideration must be given primarily to the teaching and learning of reading; all other

communication arts are secondary unless they are an integral part of the total LEA.

Another important factor which must be considered in language-based programs is pupil response to language diversity. Many children are as biased and ethnocentric as adults. In predominantly Black classrooms, sex and class variables influence children's reactions to language differences, and, in integrated settings, class, sex, and racial differences influence their reactions. Eliminating overt and covert bias and ethnocentrism is the responsibility of the total educational community. Yet, in classrooms, teachers are primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining a climate of receptivity, tolerance, and, if possible, appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Many affective or humanistic programs give helpful suggestions and activities to enhance and maintain healthy learning environments.

INTERACTION IN THE BLACK SPEECH COMMUNITY AND IN CLASSROOMS

Children of the Black speech community enter schools and classrooms with certain notions of appropriate ways of interacting. Occasionally, these ways are different than those expected of them in educational environments. For example, child-child interactions occur more frequently in the community than child-adult interactions. By contrast, children are expected to interact with adults more often than with other children in educational settings. On the other hand, other home-community interaction rules complement school and classroom rules of interaction. Each shares with the other similar greeting and address rules, ways of interacting with high status individuals, and expected child-adult ways of verbally showing deference. Despite shared interaction rules, teachers and children often fail to interact effectively in many classrooms. In many instances, it is a general lack of knowledge which underlies inappropriate classroom interaction behavior. Teachers can more effectively provide instructional strategies and learning environments which consider the total language system of dialect speaking children when they recognize the home-community interaction norms followed by children of the Black speech community.

Patterns of Interaction

Interaction rules vary according to participants, audience, context, situation, speech events, and additional metalinguistic factors. Underlying these rules are patterns of interaction which govern all communications among members of the speech community. These patterns are implicitly followed by community members who transmit them to newly born cultural members,

and children subsequently enter schools with these predetermined patterns of appropriate interaction behavior. For children many of these patterns establish adults' roles, rights, and obligations as community members. Consequently, when they reach school age (and throughout their school years), they expect similar behavior from adults in the school setting.

There are many patterns of interaction, and all of them cannot be cited here. Among the more general ones and those most relevant to classroom interaction behavior are the following:

- Adults establish all rules of interaction; they are the authority on appropriate and inappropriate ways of communicating.
- Adults (primarily adult care-givers) are responsible for teaching children interaction rules and patterns of the speech community.
- When adult care-givers fail to teach children community patterns, other adults blame care-givers for children's inappropriate interaction behavior.
- All adults are responsible for maintaining and enforcing community patterns (i.e. relatives, neighbors, storekeepers, etc.).
- Adults do not engage in lengthy conversations with children.
- Adults engage in adult-specific speech events and rarely in child-specific speech events.
- Adults engage in speech events primarily with peers.

Parallel rules are established for children by adult community members. Many are formulated on notions of expected child behavior.

- Children are expected to learn community interaction patterns.
- Children are expected to violate learned community patterns.
- Children are responsible for demonstrating knowledge only of taught rules.
- Children are responsible for demonstrating knowledge of community patterns when in the presence of non-family adults.
- Children are not required to engage in lengthy conversations with adults; such conversations occur only among peers.
- Children do not initiate conversations with adults unless directed to do so by an adult.
- Children are "talked to" and rarely "talked with."
- Child-child interactions are expected of children.

These general patterns are implicit in Black children's classroom behavior. Teachers aware of these (and other) patterns are better able to understand and accept children's interaction styles and behaviors, as well as any violations of classroom interaction patterns which may occur.

To provide classroom environments conducive to learning, additional knowledge of the Black speech community's ways of interaction is required. Teachers must learn to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable child-specific speech events and acts. For example, child-child arguing is acceptable, while child-adult arguing, cursing, and telling lies are not. They must know which expressive ways of interacting are acceptable and unacceptable to adults. "Sounding," "playing the dozens," and other "street" expressive forms are forbidden in the presence of familiar adults (or in classrooms), while justifiable expressions of anger are acceptable. In addition, there is a considerable lack of information on the ways adults interact with children and children's learnings of appropriate ways of responding. Consequently, teachers may not be aware that Black adults' use of directives and interrogatives may differ from teachers' use of them in classroom interactions with children.

In the Black speech community children are taught to respond verbally to adult directives (A) or interrogatives (B) except when they are being chastized (C) and (D).

A: Directive

Adult: *Go and get the books.*
Child: *OK* (or other verbal responses which indicate recognition that an adult has given a directive).

B: Interrogative

Adult: *Did you see who took it?*
Child: *Yes/No.*

C: Directive

Adult: *Dont' do that again; You hear!*
Child: *Uh hum.*
Adult: *I mean it.*
Child: (Silence with appropriate nonverbal behavior.)

D: Interrogative

Adult: *Didn't I tell you not to do that?*
Child: (Silence with appropriate nonverbal behavior.)

Further, in the Black speech community interrogatives are seldom used as directives in non-optional contexts (E). These are interchangable only when children have actual alternatives (F).

E: Interrogative as Directive

Teacher: *Will you get the books?*
Child: (No option; child is directed to get books.)

F: Interrogative as Directive

Adult: *Do you want to go to the movies?*
Child: *Uh hum.*
Adult: *Then you better hurry up!*

Children's home-community interaction patterns are learned both implicitly and explicitly from adult community members. With the exception of "conduct rules," all classroom interaction rules are learned implicitly. Children are expected to acquire almost immediately a set of interaction rules somewhat different than that of their speech community. Somehow many children learn, through trial and error methods and modifications and adaptations of home-community rules, to function somewhat successfully in classrooms. Rarely, however, are teachers expected to adapt or modify their own socio-culturally learned interaction patterns when faced with culturally different children; moreover, they are seldom required to learn the rules under which Black children operate. The Ann Arbor decision may help teachers (and everyone involved in education) recognize the centrality of language in instructional-learning processes.

NOTES

1. Many thanks to Dr. Donald Henderson, Sociologist and Vice Provost, University of Pittsburgh, for the concept of sound-sound rhyming word patterns: personal communication.
2. Illustrated data was taken from in-progress research on child discourse in Black speech communities conducted by the writer.
3. Interaction data was taken from in-progress research on child-adult interactions in Black speech communities. Further discussion can be found in *Language in the USA*, edited by Charles A. Ferguson and Shirley Brice Heath, in press.

Knowledge Into Practice: Delivering Research to Teachers

Robert Berdan

Reading instruction is one of the universal activities in primary school classrooms across the country. As one moves from classroom to classroom, however, it becomes apparent that approaches to reading instruction by teachers, and the responses from children, differ radically across classrooms. These differences take many forms, but there appear to be special characteristics in classrooms where the children speak in a manner that (1) does not conform to the teacher's expectations and (2) is quite different than is presumed by the reading materials used in the class. Often these are the classrooms of Black children in low income neighborhoods.

One does not have to be in these classrooms long before it becomes apparent that reading instruction is a unique activity, at least with respect to language use, i.e. the language demands that teachers place on children frequently shift radically during reading instruction. This is true particularly in the primary grades where oral reading is the principal means used to monitor children's reading performance.

The following example should serve to illustrate this point. Sometime during the course of a day, the teacher may ask a child, "Where's your pencil?" The child responds, "I' o' my des'." Both teacher and child understand and accept the interchange, and the business of the class continues. However, in reading class the rules for language use may change dramatically. If the child confronts the sequence of words it, is, on, etc., and reads aloud, "I' o' my des'," many teachers would respond with well-intentioned commentary of the child's oral reading, such as: "Oh, look at that again please. I think you left out a word. Be careful to read what you see. What was that second word? What do you see there? Look at the last word. What's that last letter? How do we pronounce that?" For the teacher, this is reading instruction. In fact, however, the reading instruction is being interrupted by an intrusion of dialect intervention. On the face of it, these

corrections are innocent enough; cumulatively, they may devastate children.

After observing these teacher routines for a while, I distilled them and put them into a reading instruction exercise I used with students in a college class on dialects. Picking and choosing characteristics from the sundry dialects of English--American social and regional dialects, British English, Indian English, and others--I put together what I called the "language of Atlantis." I knew the rules of Atlantis English, but none of my students did. I then called on the students to read aloud in this dialect they did not know. When they made errors and mispronunciations, I interrupted them and berated them, using statements/comments I have heard second and third grade teachers routinely make to their students.

The results were rather shocking. By the time these PhD candidates in English or linguistics had read 10-20 words, I could make them sound totally illiterate. By using the routines that teachers use on dialectally different students, I could produce all of the behaviors we observe in children who do not learn to read successfully. The first thing that goes is sentence intonation: they sound like they are reading a list from the telephone book. Comment on their pronunciation a bit more, and they begin to subvocalize, rehearsing pronunciations for themselves before they dare to say them out loud. They begin to guess at pronunciations--outlandish guesses that fall far outside sound-spelling correspondences of any language. They switch letters around for no reason. They stumble; they repeat. In short, when I attack them for their failure to conform to my demands for Atlantis English pronunciations, they sound very much like the worst of the second graders in any of the classrooms I have observed.

They also begin to fidgit. They wad up their papers, bite their fingernails, whisper, and some finally refuse to continue. They do all the things that children do while they are busily failing to learn to read. Emotional trauma can result as well. For instance, once while conducting this little experiment, in a matter of seconds I actually had one of my graduate students in tears. This incident caused me to reflect on the ethics of putting college students through that kind of stressful experience, no matter how dramatic the comparison, and I have since put the language of Atlantis to rest.

In an experimental situation such as I have described above, the investigator is alert to harmful effects and can alleviate them by simply changing or, if necessary, terminating the experiment. This is unhappily not the case in the real world. Indeed, in many classrooms, the situation remains unchanged. Not long ago I asked a teacher if her Black students enjoyed learning to read. She told me that sometimes they get mad when she stops them and corrects them; one girl got so mad

she cried, but the teacher reassured me, as she did the children, that she was only trying to help them, that they must learn to read what they see. The language of Atlantis may be dead, but the verbal intimidation of minority dialect speaking children under the guise of teaching them to read continues.

Intimidation certainly is not the intent of teachers. The overwhelming majority of teachers are, in fact, deeply concerned about the reading performance of their children. They sincerely believe their teaching procedures help the children, and in general they are right. But with frightening frequency, when teachers confront students who do not speak what they regard as an acceptable variety of English, the teacher's sincerity and good intentions are not enough. The children do not learn to read fluently. They also do not learn to speak the dialect with which the teachers are so preoccupied.

Worse, dialect intervention under the guise of reading instruction, however noble the intent, is frequently perceived by the child as aversive, sometimes even as abusive. And children quickly learn strategies to keep from getting hurt. They mumble; they read in a whisper; they refuse to speak at all. One Black psychologist in Los Angeles tells of his experiences learning to read as a child in New York. Sitting around in the inevitable circle, he would calculate what sentence he would be called on to read, rip the appropriate page out of his book, and sit on it. Then when his turn to read came, he simply told the teacher that he did not have the page. There are many ways to avoid getting hurt. Unfortunately, in this context they frequently have as a consequence not learning to read. In fact, the problem is not necessarily that children do not learn to read; rather as they move from first to second to third grade, they seem to learn to avoid having to read--an immediately useful survival strategy, but one with long term negative consequences.

This is, of course, not true for all classroom situations. Many teachers are well aware that supplanting reading instruction with dialect intervention is perceived negatively by children. These teachers systematically avoid any intrusions into children's oral reading that might be construed as dialect interference. Some of them, however, have only a very sketchy knowledge of the linguistic character of the children's dialect. They do not interfere in dialect specific pronunciations, but they also do not intervene when children produce actual reading errors. Because they are unable to reliably distinguish between dialect differences and reading errors, it appears that in their desire not to alienate children from reading instruction, they give children little or no corrective feedback at all. In other words, teachers place far fewer demands on children who speak Black English and other divergent social dialects than they do on other children. From a child's

point of view this is interpretable as lowered expectations for performance, and the children's reading mirrors these expectations.

The problem of perceived lowered expectations is much less visible than the problem of intruding dialect intervention into reading instruction. However, it may well be the more pervasive problem, and its negative impact on learning is just as much to be avoided. The problems of teaching minority dialect children to read are many and complex. Certainly these two teaching strategies are not the only factors related to decreased reading performance. There is good reason to believe that the home reading environment is directly related to children's school reading performance: children from homes where reading is an expected and valued behavior tend to learn to read better and more quickly than do children from homes where reading is rarely observed or experienced. The challenge in the classroom, however, is to teach all children to read. If the school cannot intervene in the value system of the home, then the cycle of illiteracy must be broken in the classroom.

Similarly, it makes little sense to blame the children for their reading problems. This is equivalent to saying, we can't teach you to read until you learn to talk like the teacher, and we really do not know how to teach you to do that either, so good luck. Such an approach makes literacy the hostage of a child's willingness and ability to acquire new dialect skills. What we really want to do is to give the child literacy skills, then use those skills to broaden dialect-related proficiencies. If families and communities desire dialect-related reading instruction for their children, then schools must seek to fill that need. This cannot be done, however, by using early reading instruction as a vehicle for dialect intervention. Experience has shown that this is not only a poor method of reading instruction, but is also an inefficient method of dialect instruction.

It is also not fair to lay all the blame on the teachers. The attitudes that teachers evidence toward ethnic dialects of English are not only the attitudes of teachers, they are pervasive in most of American society, including much of the Black community. It is unrealistic, perhaps even inappropriate, to expect the teaching profession to embrace the relativistic attitude toward dialects that professional linguists adhere to, rather than the attitudes of the community. In any event, teachers' attitudes toward language and dialect have shown themselves to be remarkably resistent to change.

Nothing is to be gained by trying to determine whether the reading problem among children who speak Black English is a community problem or a school problem. The problem exists; it must be dealt with. To do so we must determine an effective and an acceptable intervention that is capable of resolving

the problem. It should also be noted that the problem is not unique to any one school district. We are confronted with a reading problem which is national in scope, and we need solutions that can be implemented throughout our school systems.

We have identified at least two aspects of instructional practice that appear to be counterproductive in teaching reading to speakers of Black English: the intrusion of dialect intervention into reading instruction, and the very opposite approach of avoiding any corrective comment that might be perceived as dialect intervention. Children will strive for excellence only if it is demanded of them. At the same time, however, demands cannot be made in terms of a teacher-sanctioned dialect in which the children have no experience.

All of this reduces to a very simple-minded principle, one which should be universally applied with speakers of all dialects in early reading instruction: normal speaking pronunciation is appropriate oral reading pronunciation. In oral reading, we reserve our highest praise for those who read in such a way that we cannot be sure if they are reading or speaking. Why should the rules for success be different for Black children? There is nothing about the nature of print that precludes any dialect. People from Virginia and from Iowa can read the same page of English prose. They would naturally sound somewhat different when they read aloud. Similarly, speakers of English in Hong Kong, in India, and in Australia can all read the same page, and they all sound different. Why can't speakers of Black English read the same page and be allowed to sound like speakers of Black English, i.e. fluent speakers of their own dialect? This is not to say that if a community decides that there is to be dialect intervention in the school curriculum, the school should not accommodate the need. What we are saying is that early reading instruction is not the appropriate place in the curriculum to support that intervention.

The instructional principle we are suggesting is simple enough in substance. Reading pronunciations that fell within the range of the child's normal oral vocabulary would elicit no negative sanctions from the teacher; actual reading errors by Black English speaking children would be treated just as teachers treat the errors of other children. Implementation of the principle also appears simple enough. If teachers simply listened to the speech of their students, they would have the substantive knowledge of Black English that they need in order to discriminate between dialect pronunciations and reading errors. However, this simple implementation strategy falls flat for two reasons. The first is that it expects that teachers will exercise the analytic skills of linguists who are professionally accustomed to listening to many varieties of language. Teachers may know the skills of their trade extremely well, but that does not mean that they can also, with no training, transfer

what they hear children say to what they expect children to read. The second problem is that there is no reason to expect that teachers are highly motivated to undertake this task.

Over the course of the last two decades, linguistic research has documented in considerable detail most of the distinctive characteristics of Black English. In fact, in many respects Black English is more highly documented than any other dialect of English, including the elusive standard English. There is nothing to be gained by asking teachers to restart this work from scratch. But the problem of bringing the necessary knowledge to teachers in a form that they can and will use remains. Formal training and retraining of teachers, both in a college setting and in inservice training, have, in fact, had an impact on many teachers. While it is reasonable to expect that the impact will increase as these activities continue and expand, it is unreasonable to expect that the current means of providing this information through classes, textbooks, and workshops will affect the practice of all teachers who confront Black English speaking children.

Against the background of these considerations, we attempted to develop a strategy for intervening in reading instruction practice that had the following characteristics:

- it would make minimum demands on the school for teacher training
- it would make minimum daily demands on the teacher's time
- it could be implemented widely in any school anywhere
- it would provide teachers with everything they needed to distinguish between dialect pronunciations and reading errors
- it would be acceptable to teachers

If teachers are to accept normal speaking pronunciation as appropriate oral reading pronunciation, they need to know Black English pronunciations of the vocabulary in the reading program. In this sense, vocabulary must, of course, be construed broadly to include such things as plural and possessive forms of nouns and various tense and aspect forms of verbs. This information can take essentially two forms: a phonology or a dictionary. Systematic knowledge of the sound system or phonology of Black English would provide teachers with the knowledge they need to predict appropriate reading pronunciations. However, the phonology approach fails on most of the other criteria we established for an intervention strategy. The training is complex and requires specialists. And beyond these considerations, teachers would need to be trained not only in the phonology of Black English, but also in its application to reading instruction.

The dictionary approach gets around some of these problems. Use of a dictionary requires little if any training. In effect what we are talking about is a Black English dictionary that lists Black English pronunciations for the program vocabulary. Such a dictionary may well contain the information necessary to modify practice, but there is no reason to believe that it would be widely used on a daily basis for reading instruction. Teachers will seldom have the time to sit down and look up each word in each day's reading lesson. The main problem with the dictionary approach is chiefly a format problem, and as such is one that is readily solved. We evolved a format that in effect tells teachers day by day, lesson by lesson, "Here's how the Black English speaking children in your class will pronounce the new words in today's reading lesson." This involves big linguistic generalizations, no technical terms, and no political pronouncements about the equality of dialects. We're simply saying, here are the Black English pronunciations of today's new words. With this approach, we take up about three minutes of the teacher's time each day, which is about all we can expect from teachers of Black English speaking children. In our experience, if it takes more time, they won't touch it. In fact, they won't touch it if they have to open a separate book to find it. We went through the SWRL/Ginn reading series and annotated each day's lesson with conventional spelling representations of the range of Black English pronunciations that would be expected for each vocabulary item. Teachers who received these annotations interleaved into the teachers' manual did read them; teachers who received the annotations separately generally did not bother.

By trying to approach the problem from a teacher's perspective, we found a way to bring dialect information to teachers--a way that is unthreatening and useful enough that they actually read it. That is only the first half of the solution, however. Just because teachers learn expected Black English pronunciations, there is no guarantee that they will in fact modify classroom practice simply as a result of that information. There is some evidence, however, that modifications do result.

For instance, many teachers in a Texas tryout of these materials reported that they had indeed modified their teaching procedures, that they attempted not to interrupt children while the children were reading aloud, and that Black English was a recognizable and acceptable medium of response for children in their classrooms (Berdan, 1977). We had teachers gleefully report new discoveries to us: when they stopped hassling their Black children, these same children were soon eager to be allowed to read out loud--something these teachers had never experienced before. One Black teacher related her own experience of growing up in a repressive language environment, and of having recreated that repressive environment in her classroom, never thinking that there might be an alternative.

Somehow, just seeing in print, day by day, the pronunciations her students used, she realized that she could accept that as reading. It's hard to convey her wonderful sense of enlightenment at this discovery.

The main intent of this approach to intervention in reading instruction was to create a change in teaching procedures. We took this approach largely because teaching procedures seem less resistant to change than teacher attitudes towards language varieties, although those attitudes may often be as important as overt teaching strategies. What we found after a year's time was a quite substantial shift in attitudes toward Black English in the classroom. Many teachers reported that their attitudes had shifted, at least in part as a result of their exposure to the daily annotations forecasting Black English pronunciations of the program vocabulary. It also seems likely, however, that these shifts in attitude were related to the teachers' new experience of observing their Black English speaking children actually reading. Part of that new experience was undoubtedly the performance of the children; part of it was what the teachers were willing to accept as appropriate reading.

The intervention strategy outlined here turns out to be particularly appropriate for adoption in integrated classrooms. There is no need to isolate children by dialect for reading instruction or to provide children from different dialect backgrounds with different reading materials. All children use the same materials; the teacher individualizes the expectations placed on the child in oral reading.

It should also be noted that oral reading is a particularly transitional activity in reading instruction. Usually, by the time a child is in fourth grade (often earlier), oral reading has disappeared as a prime means of monitoring a child's reading performance. From the very beginning, however, the critical aspect of reading is that the child comprehend what is written. Hopefully, the language variability approach suggested here will help teachers in even the very early grades to give greater importance to comprehension and recognize oral reading as a rather imperfect means of monitoring that comprehension, not as the primary goal of reading instruction. Children who speak any dialect of English can learn to read conventional written English, and speakers of all dialects do learn successfully. Instruction that is appropriate to the child greatly facilitates the learning process as it necessarily distinguishes between normal speaking pronunciation and reading errors. Only the latter is an appropriate place for intervention in early oral reading.

Teacher Attitude Change: Does Informing Make a Difference?

Shirley A.R. Lewis

Informing teachers about Black English and Black English speakers can make a difference in both teacher attitudes and pupil performance. There are several issues, however, which require special consideration in the informing process if teachers are to profit from this effort. The purpose of this paper is to describe those issues which are essential to ar. maximally beneficial teacher education program on Black English.

Perhaps the most important first step is a clarification of terms concerning Black English. Many use the term Black English as if it refers to one Black speech variety, when in fact, it can refer to a number of dialects. For example, Black Vernacular English (BVE) is the speech variety around which most of the present controversy centers. It has grammatical and phonological patterns which distinguish it from standard English (SE) and which mark it as Black and/or Southern to most people (Williamson, 1971; Lewis and Hoover, 1979). Another Black speech variety, standard Black English (SBE), conforms to standard English grammar and phonology, and has intonational patterns which may mark the speaker as Black (Taylor, 1971). A third term, Black English (BE), is most appropriately used as a generic label which includes all varieties of speech utilized by Blacks.

The need to establish definitions of these terms was made clear in recently held Black English-related teacher training workshops (Politzer and Lewis, 1978 and 1979; Lewis and Hoover, 1979) where teachers were asked to identify well-known speakers of BVE and also to write down some examples of BVE speech. Many teachers consistently selected television characters such as "J.J." from "Good Times" and "The Rooster" from "Baretta"; political figures such as Martin Luther King and Barbara Jordan; and Black national newscasters, including Ed Bradley. The examples of BVE speech given by the teachers included many items such as "she sit," "far out," "fo'," and "goin'."

Some of the elicited examples above seem contradictory. While the television personalities characteristically use hip lexicon and some BVE grammar and phonology, Martin Luther King primarily used the intonation of the Black preaching style, Barbara Jordan essentially uses standard Black English, and most of the Black newscasters cited speak the basically unmarked "Network" speech. Included among the items cited as BVE were many which are consistently used by speakers of standard English.

Two things should be unfailingly clear from the above exercise. One is that among the wide range of teachers' choices of speakers of BVE, there is one common factor: the speakers were all Black. The individuals' speech patterns, however, actually bear little resemblance to each other. The other is that the BVE speech samples selected by the teachers include a variety of items which are widely used by the general population but which are in some way casual, lexically variant, or otherwise nonstandard.

These findings suggest that considerations of Black English involve much more than language itself. The broader issue is both cultural and political. Assumptions made about Black English parallel those made about Black people. These include sweeping generalizations (all Black people talk the same way) as well as narrow specifications (other people do not share speech characteristics with Black people).

This discussion is not meant to imply that teachers are inherently deficit in their views, but rather that they are human and are members of a system which is partially ethnocentric. Most teachers have simply not been informed about Black English, teacher attitudes, or sources of achievement for Black pupils. Informing teachers about these and other pertinent issues must be done on a broad scale.

Many of the recommendations of this paper developed from projects carried out through the Program on Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism at Stanford University (see Politzer and Lewis, 1978 and 1979; Lewis and Hoover, 1979). The primary purpose of this research was to identify ways to improve language arts instruction of bidialectal Black students. To meet this goal, small groups of teachers in various cities in the U.S. participated in the following series of activities:

- developing and administering pupil language arts proficiency tests prepared in both BVE and standard English;
- developing and performing on teacher tests of attitude and knowledge relating to teaching BVE speakers; and
- identifying positive and negative teaching behaviors as they relate to language arts instruction for bidialectal pupils.

Some of the findings of these research activities relate specifically to the Black English issue, while others are more directly related to teaching in general. In either case, there is much within these studies which is especially pertinent to any consideration of how best to prepare teachers of BVE speaking pupils.

Results from the experiments involving the administration of bidialectal pupil assessment tests (Brown et al., 1975) informed teachers of a number of facts about the various language proficiency skills of their pupils. For example, in the process of administering production and repetition tests prepared in both BVE and SBE, teachers learned first-hand that the speech of some of their pupils was balanced in favor of SBE, the speech of others was balanced toward BVE, and that the speech of still others exhibited balanced amounts of both BVE and SBE.

Many teachers were amazed to discover that pupils whom they had previously assessed as predominantly BVE speakers were bidialectal or, in some cases, were dominant in SBE. Teachers were equally surprised to learn that BVE dominant students performed correctly on all language proficiency tasks on instruments prepared in BVE. Thus, teachers learned that many of their pupils were not limited to one variety of speech and that skills assessment tests produced only in standard English did not always tap skills possessed by their BVE dominant students.

On the test which measured pupils' ability to discriminate between BVE and SBE, a relationship was found between the ability to differentiate the two speech varieties and achievement in standard English instruction. Kindergarten and first grade pupils did not perform well on this test, whereas performance increased between grades three and six. This finding showed teachers the importance of their pupils learning to discriminate between dialects and of gearing discrimination teaching activities to grade level.

Another experiment concerned the relationship of teachers' and Black pupils' language attitudes (Politzer and Hoover, 1976). Teachers and pupils were asked to listen to a variety of speech samples and to assess the achievement, social acceptability, and educational background levels of the speakers. Although there was wide variation in response to most of the scales, there was general agreement across sites and between pupils and teachers that the standard English speakers were the most likely to achieve in school. This finding showed teachers that language attitudes may be an important factor in school performance and that many bidialectal pupils already see clear reasons for gaining proficiency in standard English.

Tests were developed which assessed teacher knowledge of the history and structure of Black English and of appropriate related teaching skills (see Ford et al., 1976; Hoover et al., 1979). When these materials were field-tested, evidence was

found which suggested a relationship between teacher performance and attitude and pupil achievement (Politzer and Hoover, 1977; Politzer and Lewis, 1978 and 1979). From this information, teachers learned the value of acquiring knowledge on the origin, use, and applications of Black English, and they learned that the teacher's language attitudes were important to pupil achievement.

The final phases of the research activities concerned identifying positive and negative teaching behaviors in language instruction for Black bidialectal pupils (Politzer and Lewis, 1978 and 1979). These activities were obtained through the analysis of video- and audiotaped observations of teachers teaching lessons on grammar and sound-symbol correspondences. Those behaviors which seemed to characterize teachers of high achieving pupils, as opposed to teachers of low achieving pupils, included making direct oral corrections, modeling in initial lessons, using teaching time for activities directly related to the subject, and relatively few erroneous and/or confusing communications (Politzer and Lewis, 1978; Lewis, 1979a).

Within some of these behavior classifications, there were many conditions which related indirectly to teacher education about Black English. Especially relevant to this discussion was the Error/Confusions behavior classification, used predominantly by those teachers whose pupils made little advancement during the school year.

Broadly speaking, teachers made two kinds of errors. One consisted of outright errors resulting from carelessness, rushing, or nervousness due to the observational setting. Errors of this kind were primarily misspellings (friece for fierce) or incorrect digraphs (either and siesta in a lesson on ie digraphs). The second type of error, which held some relevance to Black English instruction, was usually made by teachers when they presented lessons on grammar. This type of error resulted from mislabelling grammatical functions (taken for the past tense of take, has already been broke for the past tense of break, and know as the present tense verb in Did you know him?).

Confusing teaching behaviors appeared to occur for two reasons. The first kind of confusion occurred because the teacher's communication was generally vague: "a verb is an action word. Well, some are and some aren't, but we usually call them action words." The second kind of confusing behavior occurred when teachers gave explanations or examples which were especially untrue or inapplicable for speakers of BVE: "If you use two words that mean 'no,' you mean 'yes'," or "When you say, 'he walk home last night,' you mean last night is today."

In discussing these findings with teachers, it soon became apparent that many had not considered the possibility that explanations applicable to standard English grammar might conflict or otherwise not apply to BVE. The teachers expressed interest in obtaining more information and guidance on the specifics of SE grammar and how such information might best be utilized in teaching BVE speakers.

Questions Teachers Ask

While in most cases expressing enthusiasm and interest in learning more about the language of and teaching methods for bidialectal pupils, teachers asked a number of very important questions. Among these were:

(1) In formal reading instruction classes, should the teacher correct the pupil's BVE phonology, as in the case of pronouncing SE told as tol' and SE four as fo'?
(2) When pupils use BVE constructions in formal compositions, should the teacher focus on content and ignore BVE, correct BVE first and then work on content, or are both factors equally important?
(3) What can individual teachers do who realize that standardized achievement tests are biased against many Black pupils, when decisions to use such tests are made at the district level?

Opinions vary on the answers to these questions. My own are as follows:

(1) When students are reading for content (that is, actually reading), their pronunciations should not be corrected. This is as true for BVE pronunciations as it is for regional U.S. dialect pronunciations. If, however, pupils are "sounding out" sections of words, there is probably no harm in modeling standard English pronunciations.
(2) While it is important to learn to spell in the standard English fashion, this may be of a lower immediate priority than issues of purpose and content of the writing. Students cannot be expected to learn everything at once, so decisions must be made about what should be dealt with first.
(3) The struggle against the use of standardized achievement tests which are biased against Black pupils is in part a political one, and it won't be resolved quickly. In the meantime, it is important for the individual teacher to know that such tests don't always test what linguistic skills their students actually have.

Ultimately, all these questions may be answered more definitively by further research.

Black English Related Information for Teachers

A perusal of the research activities suggests the importance of programs to educate teachers about Black English. These programs should include the following points:

(1) There are several varieties of Black English;
(2) Many Black pupils are competent in both Black Vernacular and standard varieties of English;
(3) Pupils and teachers equate standard English proficiency with achievement;
(4) Teachers want to learn about Black English and how best to teach BVE speaking pupils; and
(5) Many teachers need retraining on positive teaching behaviors and specific grammar-related activities relating to both standard English and BVE.

Other Relevant Concerns

Several issues requiring consideration carry very important ramifications for the development and implementation of efforts to train teachers of BVE speaking children. These are:

1. *Standard English Is the Target Language of the School*

Sometimes this fact is forgotten in all of the discussion concerning training teachers about Black English. In the Ann Arbor court case (*Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary schoolchildren et al.* v. *Ann Arbor School District Board*, 1979), the parents sued the school district because they held it responsible for *not teaching their BVE speaking children to perform in standard English.*

Further support for this view can be obtained by looking at recently liberated Third World countries. After overthrowing repressive powers, most nations immediately begin literacy campaigns, and in spite of the abundance of regional, social, or other kinds of vernaculars, the standard form of some language is always chosen as the national language. In far-removed countries for languages other than our own, this seems quite logical. This choice should be recognized as the normal and logical one for Black Americans also.

2. *The Old-Fashioned Black Traditional Schools Have Something to Offer.*

Some input for Black pupil achievement can be gleaned from traditional, Black, primarily Southern institutions. It is occasionally acknowledged that many Blacks have made great achievements through traditional, often segregated institutions.

Undoubtedly, part of what facilitated their success was the existence of high expectations on the part of the teachers and the community, greater social cohesion and cultural understanding, and perhaps other factors. Efforts should be made to identify the benefits of such schools for present-day use.

3. *Training Needs around Black English Issues May Vary According to the Socio-Cultural Composition of the Classroom.*

The choice of language use is a sociolinguistic as well as an educational one. Teachers may need training in a variety of ways to teach standard English to BVE speakers according to the setting. Further consideration is needed concerning whether the instructional method should vary according to whether BVE speakers attend classes which are predominantly Black, well integrated, predominantly White, or multilingual.

4. *It Is Vitally Important to Maintain Positive Self-Concepts.*

Self-concept has been recognized as important to personal development (Erikson, 1950; Clark and Clark, 1950) and to reading achievement (Quandt, 1972; Bond, 1979). Recent evidence suggests that a relationship exists between positive self-concept and achievement of BVE dominant children (Lewis, 1979b). An experiment was conducted to determine whether different speech varieties or different cultural contents affected the oral comprehension of stories by BVE, SBE, and WSE (White standard English) dominant pupils. Within each of the three speech variety groups, no difference was found in performance according to content or speech, and when the performances of the three speech groups were compared, Whites characteristically scored highest, SBE dominant pupils scored second, and the BVE dominant pupils performed least well on all story types.

When, however, the performance on these tests was analyzed according to positive Black cultural attitudes, an unpredicted discovery was made. Although positive Black cultural attitudes did not affect the performance of the SBE or WSE groups, it played a significant role in the performance of the BVE subjects. Those BVE dominant subjects who held positive Black cultural attitudes performed as well as or better than either the standard Black or White standard English dominant pupils on all tests.

This finding suggests that self-concept may be especially important to the academic performance of BVE speaking children. If this is indeed the case, then it will be necessary to proceed with extreme caution in teaching standard English

skills to BVE speaking children. The goal of proficient performance in SE should not be accomplished at the expense of the pupils' self-esteem.

Projecting the Issue into Time: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go from Here?

William S. Hall

Today there is a widely held belief that there are cultural differences in the functions and uses of language among various ethnic and cultural groups in the U.S. (c.f., for example, Labov, 1970; Lein, 1974; Cazden et al., 1972; Hall and Freedle, 1975). In fact, the idea of a mismatch between speakers in language functioning and use is often given as one explanation for the educational difficulties some children have in school (Bernstein, 1964, 1971). Empirical support for this is, however, very thin. An examination of previous research reveals at least three reasons for the lack of evidence: (1) The situations used to evaluate language have been quite restricted; they have concentrated primarily on language as used in schools or in strictly experimental situations. (2) There is ambiguity about the terms "function" and "use:" it is not clear whether they should be approached from the perspective of communication, cognition, or social parameters only. (3) The primary emphasis in recent work has been on content (vocabulary) and structure (grammar).

At the level of further research, these weaknesses can be overcome by a different approach. Specifically, the approach should: (1) combine psycholinguistic and ethnographic methods; (2) emphasize situational variation within as well as across settings; (3) sample subjects from Black and White lower and middle class groups (groups never sampled before in a single study); (4) have a sample whose size is large enough to permit supportable inferences; (5) focus on the combined aspects of structure, content, and function in language; and (6) evaluate change in language use and function in the transition from home to preschool.

The general hypothesis underlying a research endeavor such as this would be that minority groups and the poor use language in ways that systematically put their children at a disadvantage at school. By sampling children from different cultural and socio-economic groups, a research enterprise could

focus on the consequences, if any, which different patterns of language function and use may have for the child.

The single most important issue in this regard is the consequences for speakers, particularly with respect to their educational performance. Broadly speaking, these consequences may be either social, cognitive, or educational--three areas which are certainly part of any theory of cultural variations in school performance. Let us treat these in turn.

The social consequences of "nonstandard" speech for children can affect teacher-pupil as well as peer relationships. The consequences of a teacher's attitude toward a given dialect can be profound. For example, teacher attitudes can affect initial judgment about the children's intelligence, how they will fare as learners, how they are grouped for instruction, and how their contributions in class are treated. This in turn affects the children's self-concept as learners, their willingness to participate, and their expectations about results of their participation.

The consequences of nonstandard speech with respect to one's standing with peers may also be profound. It is often suggested that high status in peer and school settings requires opposing rules for using or not using language in various ways.

There is a long tradition in the cognitive social sciences linking language and thought. What is not clear is whether different patterns of language socialization in the home have directly discernable cognitive consequences. Of concern are cognitive consequences which might result from differences in various aspects of language, such as vocabulary. Vocabulary differences clearly reflect differences in public access to one's ideas. These differences lead to different opportunities to talk about a given meaning or aspect of meaning, which would mean that different speech communities would have different opportunities to engage in certain basic cognitive processes. For example, the process of modification in the case of adjectives or adverbs, or the process of subordination in the case of conjunctions, could easily be affected by differentially elaborated vocabularies. There is also evidence suggesting that unrecognized differences in vocabulary result in misestimates of memory capacity and "general intelligence."

The possible educational consequences of speaking a nonstandard variety of language can be illustrated for three areas: reading, the ability to engage in "instructional dialogue," and the ability to deal with a kind of meta-behavioral information. With reference to reading, a phonological mismatch can affect children's acquisition of phonic skills. Phonological mismatches are likely to lead teachers to misinterpret children's oral reading of a sentence. For example, if a child says "John pin" when looking at the sentence "John's pen," the teacher could misinterpret this as a mistake instead of a different pronunciation.

In addition, semantic mismatches may affect children's expectations about the sense of the language that they are reading.

Syntactic mismatches may also affect children's expectations about sense (see, for example, Piestrup, 1973). Moreover, different cultures might promote different levels of metalinguistic awareness, and some cultures might provide more practice than others in those skills which are reasonably isomorphic to the kinds of processes that children have to use in learning to read, e.g. counting out rhymes and jump rope chants based on alliterations or rhyming.

Certain patterns of early language socialization perhaps also hamper children's ability to engage in "instructional dialogues" when they enter school, i e. the kind of communication situation where a teacher and pupil engage in a question and answer routine in which the questioner has a specific answer in mind and the answerer's job is to guess what that answer is. The big difference between this type of interaction and the "normal" question and answer exchange is that the correctness of the answer is not necessarily judged on its truth value, but rather on its conformity to a strategy for answering which the teacher has already constructed. The question is, does the child's home communication environment provide an opportunity to engage in interactions which are similar to that of instructional dialogue? Here "similar" is used in the sense that the requirements of a correct answer are based on some ability to intuit the kind of answering strategy that the questioner has in mind, rather than on truth value or some kind of aesthetic organization of the speech act.

Patterns of language socialization that characterize some cultures/classes are often said to interfere with a child's ability to deal with analytical or "meta-behavioral" information, that is, the ability to analyze and make analytical statements about certain kinds of behavior not always reflected upon in everyday life. These include perceptual awareness (the ability to analyze a perceptual array into a set of geometrical or mathematical relationships) and behavioral awareness (the ability to analyze the emotions of a person or those of a fictional character). To understand how being a member of a given speech community might affect the ability to make this type of analysis, it is necessary to consider whether or not different cultures provide differential opportunities to engage in the kind of meta-behavioral analysis mentioned above. Since such analysis is a hallmark of schooling, it is a prime area for studying home/school mismatches (see, for example, Scribner and Cole, 1973).

Given the present state of knowledge, a number of pressing questions about the educational performance of the urban poor still remain unanswered. Certainly, the relation of language usage and school performance among different ethnic and standard English speaking (SES)-defined groups is one of them. We believe that the research questions about to be described and others like them will ultimately discover the path leading to a solution of these problems.

As a first step one might pose three general questions about young children and the significant adults in their lives:

(1) What are the important dimensions of language differences among cultural groups in the U.S. as defined by SES and ethnic group identity?
(2) Do patterns of language usage distribute across social settings and speech situations in the same way for different cultural groups?
(3) What are the cognitive consequences of variations in language function, especially the functions into which young children are socialized?

But we can be more specific in the questions that we frame for inquiry on this topic. Among many others, we might ask the following:

(1) Are there differences in the way Black and White speakers structure portions of the lexicon? (Potential differences in structuring the lexicon are of special interest because of their implications for cognitive functioning as it is exemplified in standardized test performance.)
(2) Are there differences between vocabulary used in the home and in the school situation?
(3) Admitting that both phonology and grammar are equally important determinants of dialect assessment, does phonology play a greater role in producing misunderstanding between teacher and student?
(4) To what extent do children rely on non-verbal as opposed to verbal cues in obtaining information from the environment and communicating information about the environment to others? At the heart of this question are the following sub-questions: (a) how do children acquire information from others in more structured (formal) situations, e.g. the classroom, and (b) how does their information acquisition here differ from, and/or how is it similar to, that in the naturally occurring events of their everyday life?
(5) To what extent are children likely or able to adopt a hypothetical stance toward linguistic information? Verbs and conjunctions are important pieces of data needed to answer this question. The use of verbs, for example, is important to analyze because they are essential for ascertaining meaning in sentences. Verbs are necessary for prediction in English, and prediction makes sentences something more than a string of word associations. Verbs of motion are of particular interest (e.g. move, come, go, walk, jump, run, reach, arrive), primarily because they can be studied with young children. These verbs can occur in relatively simple sentences, they have a fairly obvious perceptual basis for reference, they combine spatial and temporal aspects, and the children use them frequently.

In this article we have suggested various consequences of language variation for school learning. Implicit in our remarks has been a primary interest in the reality of such consequences for the learning of reading. It would be appropriate, therefore, to review here the evidence for the role of dialect in learning to read.

A careful look at the evidence for dialect interference in reading, taken as a whole, does not adequately identify the sources of possible consequences; the available evidence is both inconclusive and conflicting. The research on which this evidence is based contains a number of methodological flaws which cast doubt on its validity. More importantly, it is quite likely that the theoretical hypotheses which underlie these studies are in need of revision.

The often stated hypotheses are based on at least two false assumptions. The first is that ethnic differences in language performance can provide evidence for dialect interference. That phonological differences exist is, of course, obvious; that they actually interfere to a great degree with a child's learning to read is another question altogether. The second assumption is that the test-like situations under which experiments are conducted can adequately measure the effects of dialect. Research from this perspective ignores the fact that teaching and learning do not occur in isolation, but are influenced by situation and context. In a repetition task, the children's phonology, grammar, and vocabulary may vary from that in their everyday speech. Contrived, laboratory-type tasks also miss more subtle language differences, both verbal and non-verbal, which may result in miscommunication. In order to capture such differences, the function and significance of language within cultures must be included in any study of dialect interference.

We have suggested several research questions which might yield more adequate data in this area. All of these questions have at least one thing in common: they take into consideration the influence of situation and context. Questions on structure, for example, are not asked in isolation, but in relation to the effects on teacher-student or text-student communication. Questions on language use center on actual language experiences in the classroom and the home. Thus, by making studies more in line with the ethnography of communication, aspects of dialect interference overlooked by previous studies can be examined.

The implications of this type of research for reading lie primarily in the area of reading instruction. If researchers can specify for educators actual sources of miscommunication in the educational experience of dialect speakers, several benefits will be realized. Because the differences specified will be those which actually result in a lowering of school achievement, a clearer picture of dialect interference will emerge. Educators will thus be better equipped to handle the problems of dialect

that do emerge. And as they become more sensitive to the cultural differences that influence teaching and learning, teachers will be able to modify the ways in which they interact with dialect speaking students to better accommodate their needs, not only in terms of actual instructional methods, but in other ways as well. Changes might also be seen in the materials used for reading instruction. Unlike the suggestions of the 60s (e.g. dialect readers), however, they would be both theoretically motivated and based on empirical evidence.

Ultimately, we would hope that research from the perspective we have outlined would contribute to the elimination of inequities in American education.

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